



Strengthening STD Prevention and Control for Health Departments

Technical Assistance Note #13 & #14 | Promoting STD prevention to the public and providers

From Strategy Area IV: Promote STD Prevention and Policy

13. Promote STD prevention to the public
 - a. Provide audience-appropriate, 508-compliant, STD prevention information online, including answers to common STD questions (e.g., symptoms, testing methods, treatment) and places where testing and treatment are available
14. Promote STD prevention and reporting to provider community
 - a. Notify local providers and organizations about important or timely STD-related issues, such as outbreaks, emerging diseases, recommended treatment changes, biomedical advances, and reporting requirements

Why DSTDP included these strategies

Health department STD programs must be a trusted source for basic information on STDs for the public as well as the broad spectrum of providers who may need information on STD epidemiology and clinical care. While STD programs do not have to be experts in all aspects of STD prevention and control, they should be able to provide strong referrals to resources that have that expertise. They should be able to both respond to inquiries and actively disseminate information to broad audiences as needed.

Considerations for implementation

Providing online health promotion information to the public and providers

- Define the audiences the program seeks to reach through the website
- Define the messages and information that the STD programs want to relay about STDs and the program
- Define clear and specific communication goals for each of those audiences
- Identify the webmaster in charge of the STD program's content and understand protocols for requesting and making updates to it
- Identify any health communication resources or staff available to the STD program for creating the content
- Incorporate sections tailored to specific audiences and those goals. For example, the site may have:
 - Detailed clinical information for providers needing latest treatment information
 - STD Q&A site including information for people seeking answers to common STD-related questions
 - Surveillance data presented various ways, with technical surveillance reports for public health counterparts and more streamlined, high-level versions for the public
- Include updated links and syndicated content from trusted partner sites
- Incorporate service finders for people wanting to know where they could get tested or treated
- When possible, incorporate a feedback loop where visitors can provide suggestions for additional content or improvements
- Ensure websites are:
 - Cleared by appropriate authorities

- 508 compliant
- “Digital first” or built to be viewed on various devices (e.g., phones, tablets, desktops)
- Labeled and described clearly to make all content easier to use and navigate
- Reviewed and updated regularly – particularly the most popular webpages accessed
- Social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are also effective ways of reaching target audiences online. Similar to the process for a website, you should:
 - Define your audiences and messages
 - Set clear and specific communication goals for each of those audiences

Conducting outreach to the broader provider community

- Maintain an updated Health Alert Network (HAN) system for sending out alerts and updates to a broad range of providers in the jurisdiction, or high morbidity areas within a jurisdiction
- Advertise the use of any available STD clinical warm line/hot line (e.g., NNPTC’s [Clinical Consultation Network](#))
- Distribute notices about changes in STD reporting policies, procedures, and forms through automated email or FAX systems
- Participate in relevant local provider conferences to share information and identify opportunities for new collaborations/partnerships/educational opportunities
- Tap staff from regional and national STD prevention training centers to present at relevant local conferences and meetings



Strategy #14 is different from those related to promoting CDC-recommended screening, diagnosis, and treatment practices for high priority populations (see TA Notes #12a-12c). Those describe efforts that are more intensive and tailored to particular providers and populations, compared to this strategy. Strategy #14 is about providing a public service to the broader provider community in a jurisdiction.

Other resources

- Plain language: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/plainlanguage.html>
- Writing for the web: <https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/writing-for-the-web.html>
- Syndicated content from CDC’s Division of STD Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/products/syndicated.htm>
- CDC’s Get Tested website: <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>
- Customizable “State of STDs” infographic: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/infographic.htm>
- Social Media tools and guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/>

For more information or feedback on this document, contact your DSTDP Prevention Specialist or email STD_PCHD@cdc.gov. CDC’s Division of STD Prevention, Program Development and Quality Improvement Branch, developed this document for recipients of PS19-1901 STD PCHD to provide additional clarification of strategies outlined in that NOFO and to support program implementation. The content here does not represent additional NOFO requirements nor official CDC recommendations. Issue date: April 2019