



KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

Dear Colleague,

April marks the annual observance of STD Awareness Month. This month is an opportunity to bring a renewed sense of enthusiasm and focus to STD awareness and prevention efforts.

Due to the rising rates of syphilis, the theme of this year's STD Awareness Month is **Syphilis Strikes Back**. Local health jurisdictions that are facing high rates of syphilis may want to coordinate outreach efforts to reflect CDC's weekly syphilis prevention themes, which are listed below.

- (April 1-8): [Syphilis in the U.S.](#) - An overview of what it is, how it's affecting specific communities, and why this potentially dangerous health issue needs attention
- (April 9-15): [Syphilis among gay, bisexual and other MSM](#) – Focus on the group hardest-hit by syphilis and what individuals and healthcare providers can do to help
- (April 16-22): [Syphilis among women, pregnant women, and newborns](#) – Focus on the increases among women and its impact on pregnant women and newborns, as well as what individuals and healthcare providers can do to help
- (April 23-30): [Disrupt Syphilis!](#) – The final week will focus on what actions are needed to tackle syphilis moving forward

Additional information about CDC's **Syphilis Strikes Back** campaign can be found [here](#).

We recognize that some local health jurisdictions don't have a problem with syphilis, and even among those with high rates of syphilis, there may be an interest in focusing prevention messaging to youth and other populations that are disproportionately affected by STDs.

To help with your efforts, we are providing a list of some resources, as well as talking points to focus on when interacting with local media outlets:

- [STD Awareness Resource Site \(CDC NPIN\)](#) – Created by the CDC for STD Awareness Month, this website contains tools and resources for STD prevention, including [tips and tools](#) on how to share STD prevention messages with media outlets.
- [Take Charge of Your Sexual Health \(NCSH\)](#) – Created by the National Coalition for Sexual Health, this guide for youth and adults provides information about recommended screenings, vaccinations and counseling.



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- [CDC's STD Prevention Infographics](#) – This webpage includes a variety of STD-related infographics for the public and providers, with the option to print or share the graphics on a website.

Youth Resources:

- [Get Yourself Tested \(GYT\) Campaign](#) – This youthful campaign was created by the National Coalition of STD Directors, MTV and other partners to normalize STD testing and treatment among youth. Local health departments can order free promotional materials and can [add a widget](#) to their website to help visitors find local STD testing location.
- [Condom Access Project \(CAP\)](#) – This project of Essential Access Health provides free condoms to California teens that need them. Depending on where youth live, they can order condoms online or pick up free condoms at a teen-friendly location. Youth can learn more about CAP at [TeenSource.org](#).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resources:

- [What Gay, Bisexual and Other MSM Need to Know About STDs \(CDC Fact Sheet\)](#)
- [LGBT-friendly provider directory \(GLMA\)](#)
- [For Men Only: Your Sexual Health \(NCSD patient resource\)](#)

HIV Prevention Resources:

- [STD Prevention is HIV Prevention \(CDC STD Awareness Month Resources\)](#)
- [HIV/AIDS campaigns \(CDC NPIN\)](#)
- [Ask Me About PrEP campaign by Altamed](#)

Talking Points for STD Awareness Month:

- STDs are common and increasing.
- Youth are more likely to get an STD compared to older age groups.
- STDs can cause serious health problems.
- Many STDs can be prevented with the correct and consistent use of condoms.
- The most common symptom of an STD is no symptom at all. The only way to know you have one is to get tested.
- STD prevention is HIV prevention. If you have an STD, seeing a healthcare provider for proper treatment will reduce your risk of getting HIV.



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Data and additional information and resources may be found at std.ca.gov.

Please plan on joining us for the April Local Capacity Building webinar which will focus on health promotion, outreach and education at the local level. We will highlight exciting outreach work that is currently happening and existing resources to support local efforts. For participation information, please email stdcb@cdph.ca.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandee Differding at Sandra.Differding@cdph.ca.gov.
If you obtain any press coverage, please feel free to share it with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi M. Bauer'.

Heidi M. Bauer, MD, MPH
Chief, STD Control Branch
California Department of Public Health
Office: 510-620-3178
Cell: 510-520-9868
Fax: 510-620-3180
Email heidi.bauer@cdph.ca.gov