



Promoting Sexual Health
Through STD Prevention

NCSDDC.ORG

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Public Comments

Meeting of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS

My name is Taryn Couture. I am the Associate Director of Government Relations at the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSDDC), located in Washington, DC.

On behalf of NCSDDC, I want to thank the Council for convening this meeting and for the important work you are doing and in such an exciting time for the field.

Collaboration at the National Level

The National Coalition of STD Directors is thrilled to see the Administration's new initiative to End the HIV Epidemic (EtHE) quickly taking shape. We believe that, with adequate resources, STD programs will play an important role in reducing new infections by 90 percent in ten years. The syndemic nature of HIV and STDs makes STD programs and providers essential partners in the EtHE plan. STD programs and clinics already serve populations at high risk for HIV infection and play a significant role in HIV testing and linkage to care. Building on existing infrastructure at the national, state, and local levels, STD programs will be of enormous value to the Administration's efforts to end the epidemic.

It is NCSDDC's position that the STD field could be mobilized and leveraged to support this initiative in innovative ways including: expanding HIV counseling, testing, and linkage to care as well as PrEP services in STD clinics and other sites providing STD clinical services, expanding and improve the DIS workforce for HIV testing and linkage to care, assuring condom availability and educational outreach, supporting jurisdiction's efforts to improve data sharing across STD and HIV surveillance systems.

State engagement of STDs in the Planning Process

In an effort to better understand how States with current end AIDS plans have included and engaged STDs in innovative ways NCSDDC reviewed 16 available plans from the 48 counties, seven states, Washington DC, and San Juan Puerto Rico. This analysis included Washington State and Alabama, whom we have heard from today.

In general, we found that 15 of the 16 plans touched on STDs, with:

- 14 touching on the importance of increasing STD testing
- 8 touching on condom distribution and best practices for HIV prevention
- 7 touching on the use of STD and HIV data
- 6 touching on STD clinics, PrEP, nPEP, and HIV testing
- 4 touching on the use of DIS for HIV prevention



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Overall the best examples from these plans around actions STD programs can take to support ending the HIV epidemic included:

- Testing for HIV in STD clinics
- Testing for HIV when testing for STDs
- Using Disease Intervention Specialists and/or partner services to test individuals for HIV
- Connecting individuals testing positive for an STD to PrEP services, PEP and rapid-start ARVs
- Expand and improve or implement condom distribution best practices
- Educate about HIV services when testing and treating for STDs
- Identify overlaps in STD and HIV data to identify geographic clustering of STD and HIV cases

NCSDDC encourages that as jurisdictional plans are developed STD programs be involved to further ensure that innovative approaches to HIV and STD prevention are represented. Furthermore, we ask that PACHA and federal partners encourage jurisdictions to include STD programs in the development of ending the HIV epidemic plans.

STD Representation

On a similar note, we would like to see STD representation on PACHA. As mentioned above there is a clear connection between HIV and STDs, in-fact in many states HIV and STD prevention are administered by either the same team or share staff and resources within the health department, there has also been numerous research showing the connection between STDs and increased risk of HIV transmission. Therefore, we strongly believe that the STD field should be represented on the Council.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments and recommendations with you today.