

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Labor, HHS, and Education
Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Labor, HHS, and Education
Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you develop the FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, **we urge you to provide \$279 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent and control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).**¹

It is estimated that there are nearly 68 million STD infections every year, with a financial toll of \$16 billion in direct medical costs.² For the sixth consecutive year, U.S. cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis hit an all-time high, with a yearly increase of 2.5 million cases.³ The sharpest increase was in the rates of congenital syphilis, which increased 279 percent since 2015.⁴ Without treatment, STDs can have serious health consequences, including cervical cancer, ectopic pregnancy, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and increased risk of getting and transmitting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).⁵

STDs disproportionately impact ethnic and racial minority groups, gay and bisexual men, and young people. In 2019, STD rates for African Americans were five to eight times that of non-Hispanic White people and gay and bisexual men made up almost half of all primary and secondary syphilis cases. Additionally, 61 percent of chlamydia cases occurred in young people aged 15 to 24 years old.⁶ Additional funding for STD prevention can help reduce these disparities.

The COVID-19 emergency response continues to have significant impacts on STD prevention efforts across the nation. During the pandemic response, 78 percent of the STD/HIV health department workforce were redeployed to COVID-19 emergency response, including a large

¹ The CDC received \$164,310,000 in funding to prevent and control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in FY22.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0125-sexually-transmitted-infection.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2019/default.htm>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2019/announcement.htm>

⁵ <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/sexually-transmitted-diseases#:~:text=In%20addition%2C%20STDs%20can%20cause,infants%20born%20to%20infected%20mothers.>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0413-stds.html#:~:text=The%20newly%20released%202019%20STD,STDs%20between%202015%20and%202019.>

portion of the disease intervention specialists (DIS)/contact tracers who were tracking STDs.⁷ The disruptions to STD prevention efforts due to the response to COVID-19 has a direct correlation to the increase in STD rates.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly shows that a significant investment must be made to combat more than one infectious disease at a time. Therefore, we are requesting \$279 million for the CDC to help rebuild State and local health departments to increase capacity, address understaffing, and DIS training and team management.

A one- time investment of \$50 million must also be made to change the current grant year, from January to July, for State health departments engaged in STD prevention and control activities. Under the current timetable, State health departments must submit grant applications by January 1, based on the previous year’s funding level because final appropriations have not been enacted. Once appropriations are enacted, States must file additional paperwork before any funds added by Congress can be distributed. Moving the grant year to July—which is a common application date for many grant programs—would lessen the administrative burden on State health departments and ensure more efficient use of funds.

Stemming the tide of STDs across the nation requires a strong federal investment and commitment to ensure the health of all our communities and prevent the spread of STDs. Thank you for your continued support of STD prevention and control. We greatly appreciate your leadership and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



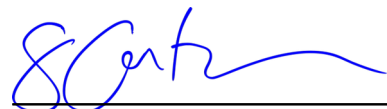
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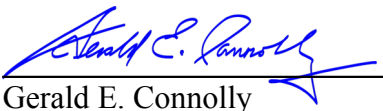


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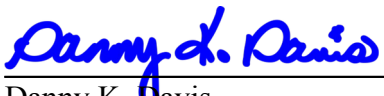


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⁷ https://www.ncsddc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/STD-Field.Survey-Report.II_Final-8.6.20.pdf



Gerald E. Connolly
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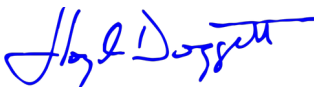
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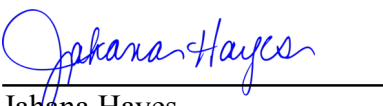
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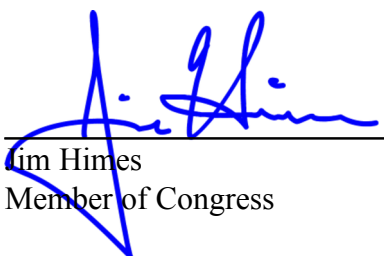
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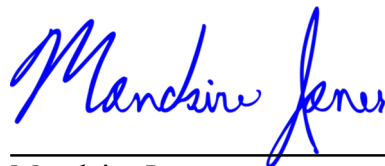
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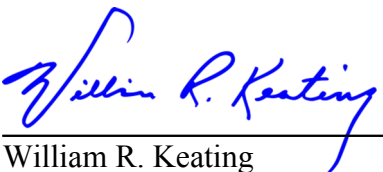
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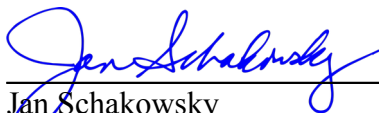
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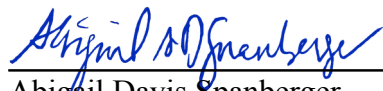
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