

# STD AWARENESS MONTH

## Open Letter

**Dear Editor,**

April is STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise public awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on the lives of Americans and the importance of individuals discussing sexual health with their health care providers and if sexually active, their partners.

STDs are a major public health issue in the United States.

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there are approximately 19 million new cases of STDs each year, almost half of them among young people ages 15 to 24.
- STDs have an economic impact: direct medical costs associated with STDs in the U.S. are estimated at up to \$15.3 billion annually.
- There are physical and psychological impacts. Untreated, STDs can lead to serious health consequences, including infertility.

Many of those who are infected don't know it. Many STDs do not have any symptoms. The only way to know for sure whether you have an STD is to get tested, which is why CDC and other professional health organizations recommend that sexually-active women ages 25 and younger be screened annually for chlamydia. Chlamydia can be diagnosed using a urine-based test and is easily treated with antibiotics. If left untreated, chlamydia can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy, infertility and chronic pelvic pain. Sex partners of women diagnosed with chlamydia should also be treated with antibiotics to avoid re-infection.

To bring attention to the importance of knowing the facts about STDs, we need the support of community leaders, health providers, and policy makers. Community leaders can help increase awareness about the need for STD screening, treatment, and prevention. Health care providers can help by talking with their patients about sexual health and by screening and treating, as appropriate. Policy makers must be aware of the impact of STDs on the health of their constituents.

STDs are preventable and treatable. Working together to build awareness will help us prevent the spread of STDs in our community.

We challenge you to bring awareness to your community.

Sincerely,

Author

Title

Organization

Contact Information