



## STD AWARENESS MONTH

Press Release

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### Long Island Association for AIDS Care Highlights Health Impacts of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

During April 2008- STD Awareness Month

Hauppauge, New York (April 9, 2008) – Approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States – and almost half of these are among young people aged 15 to 24, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) pose a serious public health threat to Americans – particularly young women, African Americans, men who have sex with men (MSM), and individuals living in poverty or who have limited access to healthcare. STDs cost the United States' health care system as much as \$15.5 billion annually.

STDs pose a serious health threat to the residents of Nassau and Suffolk counties, particularly our youth. According to the Suffolk County Department of Health, there was an increase of 24% of Chlamydia cases between 2002 and 2003, with the great majority of infections (73%) in the 15-29 year old age group. Of the 470 cases of Gonorrhea reported in Suffolk County in 2003 (rate of 32.2 per 100,000), 73% was in the 20-29 year old age group and 25% was in the 15-19 year old age group. The incident rate of Syphilis in Suffolk County is .71 cases per 100,000, higher than the New York State average. (Suffolk County Community Health Assessment 2005-10) In Nassau County, there was a 20% increase in the incidence of Chlamydia between 2004 and 2007. (Nassau County Department of Health Assessment 2005-20010) In 2006, the Nassau County Department of Health reported 2,229 cases of Chlamydia, 416 cases of Gonorrhea and 137 cases of Syphilis. Due to the recent resurgence in early syphilis, especially in men who have sex with men, the Nassau County Department of Health has made syphilis management a priority.

There are many effective ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat STDs. STD screening and early diagnosis are vital to prevent serious health consequences and increased transmission. "Screening is particularly important since many STDs often have no signs or symptoms. CDC recommends annual Chlamydia screening for sexually active women under the age of 26. For sexually active MSM, CDC recommends annual HIV and Syphilis blood testing, annual Chlamydia testing, as well as annual gonorrhea testing, with more frequent testing for MSM who engage in high-risk behavior.

For more information about STDs and testing options in your community, please call our toll free hotline at 1-877-865-4222 or visit our website at [www.liaac.org](http://www.liaac.org)

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