



September 2022

Dear Health Center Program and Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Colleagues,

We are pleased to introduce the ***Addressing STIs: Ask. Test. Treat. Repeat*** awareness campaign. The awareness campaign culminates our evaluation and dissemination efforts of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) *Improving Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Screening and Treatment among People with or at Risk for HIV* initiative. The RWHAP SPNS initiative was coordinated by Rutgers School of Nursing in nine demonstration sites across three jurisdictions. The initiative's interventions included:

- A welcoming clinic space for LGBTQ+ patients;
- An audio, computer-assisted self-interview about sexual history, allowing patients to privately answer sexual history questions rather than face-to-face with a provider;
- Patient self-collection of extragenital site chlamydia/gonorrhea nucleic acid amplification test (CT/GC NAAT) specimens; and
- Provider training.

We encourage clinical teams to access and use the campaign materials in their clinics. These materials will provide guidance on implementing the interventions, which were found to improve:

- Patient comfort and satisfaction levels;
- Patient report of STI risk behaviors; and
- Identification of bacterial STIs, primarily extragenital, asymptomatic infections.

This campaign was conducted in response to increasing rates of bacterial STIs in the United States since 2014. When patients collect their own CT/GC NAAT specimens, the specimens are considered as acceptable as provider collected specimens while preserving patients' sense of dignity. This approach fosters autonomy and patient-centered care. Some providers have traditionally provided STI testing only to people with symptoms and/or conducted an annual urine NAAT and syphilis test for identifying STIs.

To get started using these resources:

- 1) Visit <https://targethiv.org/STIs>
- 2) Download and review the campaign provider toolkit to help incorporate the interventions. The kit features factsheets on making your clinic a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ patients, tips for utilizing a computer-assisted self-survey tool, CT/GC NAAT self-collection instructions for patients, infographics, and videos. Resources are also available in Spanish.

Together, we can improve the health of our patients, reduce STI morbidity and mortality, and support healthier communities.

Sincerely,

/Laura W. Cheever/

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