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PRESS RELEASE

New STD Surveillance Data Shows Continuing Burden of Disease
Continued vital investments for testing and treatment needed

Washington, D.C. -- Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its 2010 sexually transmitted disease (STD) surveillance data. This annual report of statistics and trends for the three reportable sexually transmitted diseases in the United States shows that STDs rates in this country are still shockingly high, particularly in communities of color and among gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

“This new data shows a persistence of the same trends that we have been seeing for years—that MSM and communities of color are continuing to bear a disproportionate share of the STDs in this country,” said William Smith, Executive Director of the National Coalition of STD Directors. “We should also not lose sight of a number of new additional studies this past year on the link between STDs and acquiring HIV. The 2010 STD data released today shows that we need to look closely at further investments in STD prevention as a means to prevent HIV as well,” continued Smith.

While the 2010 data shows that overall rates for syphilis went down compared to 2009, the first decrease in in ten years, rates among Hispanics went up just over nine percent in the last year and MSM still account for two-thirds of the syphilis in this country. In addition, black men continue to have the highest rates of syphilis in the U.S., with young (20-24) black MSM seeing an increase of syphilis of a shocking 135 percent between 2006 and 2010. Co-infection of those with syphilis and HIV also continues; between 25-54 percent of those with primary or secondary syphilis were also HIV positive.

“The good news is that there was a drop of 8.5 percent in the rate of black men diagnosed with either primary or secondary syphilis in 2010 compared to the year prior,” said Smith. “While too early to definitely assess the cause for this drop, there has been a distinct appeal for several years now to help address the explosion of syphilis among black men, particularly among young black

MSM, and we must keep up efforts to prevent increasing rates of STDs and HIV among this group,” concluded Smith.

Rates for Chlamydia continued to increase over the last year, as they have for twenty years. This is in part due to increased testing which is increasingly identifying positive cases, of which there were more than 1.3 million reported in 2010. Black women continue to have the highest rates for Chlamydia, as well as gonorrhea. While there was only a small increase in the overall rates of gonorrhea, the rates of gonorrhea in Hispanics went up 12 percent compared to 2009.

Across all three diseases, communities of color and young people overall continue to be most affected, though even for all ages of whites, increases were seen for all three diseases in 2010. Among whites in 2010, rates of chlamydia increased by 7.5 percent, 9.2 percent for gonorrhea, and 3.6 percent for syphilis in 2010 compared to 2009.

“We hope the unacceptably high rates of STDs in this country continue to be clarion call for securing the sexual health of all people,” said Smith. “This means that state and federal investments in STD prevention remain a critical need in these times of tight budgets and that as healthcare reform continues to move ahead, that partners in every sector ensure that the safety net for these services continues to exist,” continued Smith.

The full 2010 STD surveillance data can be found on the CDC website at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats10/default.htm>.

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The National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD) is a partnership of public health professionals dedicated to promoting sexual health through the prevention of STDs. NCSD provides dynamic leadership that strengthens STD Programs by advocating for effective policies, strategies, and sufficient resources and by increasing awareness of their medical and social impact. For more information, visit www.NCSDDC.org.