

## MAKING THE CASE FOR SOUND STI POLICY WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Let your voice be heard! Contact your elected officials with the following message:

*The high rate of sexually transmitted infections in the U.S. is unacceptable. STIs are particularly devastating for women, teenagers, and newborn babies. Untreated STIs can cause serious complications, cancer, infertility, and even death. Research has shown that STIs increase a person's chance of getting HIV/AIDS. We can prevent and cure many STIs, so why not put more resources into stopping the spread?*

Here are more points that you can make with your elected officials:

### **The United States has the highest rate of STIs in the industrialized world.**

- More than half of all people will have an STD/STI at some point in their lifetime.
- There are nearly 20 million new STI cases each year in the United States.

### **STIs take a particular toll on women, adolescents and newborns.**

- Because of their anatomy, women are more likely to get an STI and less likely to notice symptoms than men are.
- Untreated STIs can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, life-threatening ectopic pregnancy, cervical cancer and infertility.
- About 50% of all new STI infections in the United States each year are in people under 25 and one-fourth are in teenagers.
- Teens are at high risk for STIs in part because of immature immune systems.
- Infants born to infected mothers are subject to premature delivery, pneumonia, eye infections and even death.

### **Persons with a pre-existing STI have a three to five-fold increased risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.**

- While there is no vaccine or cure for AIDS, we can prevent and cure many of the STIs that increase the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.

### **Spending scarce public resources on STI prevention is cost effective.**

- The annual medical cost of treating the consequences of STIs in the United States is over \$16 billion.
- The cost of screening and treatment programs would be far less than the cost of untreated STIs and their long-term consequences. For example, every \$1 spent on chlamydia control saves \$12 in future healthcare expenditures.

