

STD Awareness Action: California 2010

The GYT campaign is scheduled to launch in April and last all year long.

Attention involved students and college campuses: the GYT Campus Challenge on Facebook kicks off April 1. The campus that builds the largest amount of GYT supporters/fans on Facebook relative to the size of their student body will be featured by MTV News. Students on the winning campus will win a trip, accommodations, and tickets to see Cobra Starship, Travie McCoy and more in Summer 2010. Please be sure to register your campus and start recruiting Facebook fans on April 1.

Community highlights

Local agencies and schools will be participating in the GYT campaign and other STD awareness activities. There will be notices in local and school papers and in agency newsletters, peer educators will distribute STD information and condoms, and *people will be talking about STDs and getting tested.*

- **Alameda County** will be offering **Challenges & Fortitude**: A Workshop for Today's Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Educator. This full day event will take place on April 19th in downtown Oakland. For detailed information contact eva.mourad@acgov.org or call 510-268-2384.
- **Contra Costa County** will kick off a campaign connecting alcohol use/abuse with the increased risk for transmitting STDs. For more details contact Cristine Lieverman cleiverm@hsd.cccounty.us
- **Nevada County**: Sarah Molaro Sarah.Molaro@co.nevada.ca.us will be tabling at two high schools and at a junior college with info about STDs, domestic violence and alcohol awareness. Custom "Protection Protectors" (condom cases with local resources listed and tips on condom safety made by youth advocates) will be offered at these tables and through a satellite condom basket program through a non-profit. Nevada County will also be participating in a large Earth Day event at the college with this same information.

▪ Orange County

GET YOURSELF TESTED (GYT) SCHEDULED EVENTS AT ORANGE COUNTY COLLEGE HEALTH CENTERS

1. Golden West College, Huntington Beach.

Contact: Rob Bachmann, 714-895-8382

Dates: April 5 - April 30, 2010.

Gonorrhea and Chlamydia Screenings

*Student Council in collaboration with the Health Center -

To promote GYT campaign by disseminating STD sexual health materials and gift items to participating students.

2. California State University, Fullerton.

Contact: Mary Becerra, 657-278-2847

Date: April 2, 2010 .

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Screenings.

*Student Health And Counseling Center -

To promote GYT campaign by outreaching to student clubs, sororities, minority student associations.

Will also disseminate STD related educational materials.

3. Santa Ana College

Contact: Luz Hernandez, 714-564-6216

Date: April 21, 2010

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Screenings

*Student Health Center with volunteer student council members -

To promote GYT campaign to peers in classroom settings, student athletes and students campus-wide. Will create and develop banner and other STD prevention related information leading up to the scheduled date.

4. University of California, Irvine.

Contact: Alisa F. Flores, 949-824-8206

Health Education Center -

Will refer students to other non-profit clinics and sexual health providers for gonorrhea and chlamydia screenings.

April is Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month: For information about STD Testing and Education contact:

- Orange County Health Care Agency Testing and Treatment Clinic at 714-834-8787
- The Orange County Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448
- Your local provider
- For STD facts and education click here: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/std>

- **San Diego County: The San Diego Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition Presents: Sex & Race A Forum on Racial Disparities and Sexual Health Outcomes.** The forum will be held on Wednesday, April 7, 2010. For details contact Rose Ochoa Rosemari.Ochoa@sdcounty.ca.gov

- **San Mateo County:** Posters will be running along with last year's Hook Up poster (see SWAP listings) on the buses and trains in San Mateo County for the month of April. For more details, contact Melissa Wong, Community Program Specialist, STD/HIV Program, San Mateo County Health Department mwong2@co.smcountry.ca.us

- **In the NEWS:** The following article was seen in a **Tuolumne County** local paper. CSI: Public Health

Based upon the high quality education bestowed upon us by the endless stream of crime scene investigation mysteries on television, we learn that one of the first lessons for those trying to catch crooks is to think like the criminal. If the suspect is a sailor, stake out the marina. Similarly, when considering how to best find the culprit in an infectious disease, it is helpful to think like the virus or bacteria in question. What would I do if I were an STD?

Consider what characteristics can lead a germ to end up on the "Ten Most Wanted" list. First, it is important to recognize that germs are much more likely to create an epidemic if they avoid calling attention to themselves and do not kill their host. When an illness announces its arrival with large red spots on the face or causes life-threatening symptoms, it can hardly avoid being discovered and arrested.

Similarly, an organism that kills its host is destroying its own meal ticket. Sometimes this strategy works, but only when the victim showers the environment with germs as the illness progresses.

Causing an infection which allows the victim to go about his or her business while being attracted to and expressing affection for others is an ideal way to guarantee success as a germ. This is the successful strategy employed by the mononucleosis virus which is also known as the "kissing disease."

Another germ that takes advantage of this tactic is the Chlamydia bacteria, the most commonly reported infectious disease to Health Departments in California. Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) which usually causes very few symptoms. Chlamydia may cause burning with urination in males or females, or crampy pain and mucous discharge from the vagina in females. The devastating inflammation that it stirs up in the female organs is the most common cause of female infertility. By causing inflammation in the genital tract, Chlamydia also increases the likelihood that other infections like HIV/AIDS can be transmitted.

For a germ to be successful, it must procure a means of transportation that is dependable. West Nile Virus found just such a transportation system in the mosquito population. What better way to assure a trip from host to host than to hitchhike on a vehicle as readily available as mosquitoes in the summer?

The most dependable way to avoid becoming a victim of the germs that cause STDs is to abstain from sexual contact. Conveying this message to those confused by the discovery of new attractions is, of course, the full time occupation of the parents of adolescents. From the perspective of the STD, depending upon the gravitational forces that from time to time develop between two human beings is as reliable a method of transmission as there is.

In people who are sexually active, condoms have been shown to reduce the transmission of infection, although different studies have found that the risk of infection is diminished differently for different infectious organisms. Also, the amount of protection afforded by condoms is very dependent upon proper condom use. Because reading the package insert is not often a priority at the moment of passion, it is important to learn such things ahead of time.

A second way to prevent STDs from inflicting permanent damage upon the population is to test for the presence of the germs in any person who is sexually active. This can be done at the time of a routine physical, at the time of a visit to the family planning clinic, or in response to symptoms experienced by a patient. The test can now be done for the two most common STD germs, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, simply by collecting a urine specimen.

Another way to protect the public from the effects of STDs is to vaccinate against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). The new HPV vaccine provides protection against four strains of the HPV virus that are responsible for 70% of cervical cancer. We screen for cancer of the cervix with the Pap Smear obtained every three years after women become sexually active. The HPV vaccine consists of a series of three doses given after nine years of age.

The surest way to decrease the discovery of crime is to stop looking for criminals and ignore the existence of misconduct. Infectious organisms would love for the health care system to give up on screening the population for STDs and stop encouraging the use of condoms for people who choose to be sexually active. Unfortunately, such a course will not make these villains go away.

Written by Todd Stolp
STStolp@co.tuolumne.ca.us