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NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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RE: APRIL IS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) Promotes Awareness and Testing for Sexually Transmitted Diseases during STD Awareness Month

Every day, an estimated 125 New York teens and young adults (15-24 years) are diagnosed with Chlamydia and 25 are diagnosed with gonorrhea. These are part of the estimated 9-10 million new Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) infections among 15-24 year olds in the US, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). STDs pose a serious public health threat to Americans and cost an estimated \$15.3 billion per year.

STDs such as Chlamydia and gonorrhea are major causes of infertility among women. Many STDs can increase the risk of HIV transmission for both men and women. In New York State, excluding New York City, Chlamydia is the most common reportable disease with 68,725 reported cases in 2006, an increase of 6.5% from 2005. The number of primary and secondary syphilis cases also continues to increase with 736 cases reported in 2006, over four and a half times as many cases as in 2000.

In 2008, the Niagara County Department of Health STD clinic reported 139 cases of Chlamydia, 115 cases of Gonorrhea and 4 cases of Syphilis. The 2008 cumulative cases in Niagara County, including those diagnosed at the Niagara County STD Clinic, doctor's offices, hospitals and private clinics, add up to 839 cases of Chlamydia, 329 cases of Gonorrhea and 4 cases of Syphilis.

Many STDs can be treated or cured. STD testing and early diagnosis is critical to prevent serious health complications and further transmission of the disease. Screening is particularly important since many STDs have no signs or symptoms. The CDC recommends annual screening for Chlamydia for sexually active women under the age of 26. Sexually active teenagers and young adults should be screened for STDs, including HIV. The CDC also recommends that girls and women between the ages of 11 and 26 who have not been previously vaccinated or who have not completed the full series of shots, be fully vaccinated against human papilloma virus (HPV), the virus known to cause genital warts and cervical cancer.

Public Health: Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Vaccination for Hepatitis B is recommended for all sexually active teenagers and adults who have not previously been vaccinated and have had multiple sex partners during the previous six months. Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccination is also recommended for men who have sex with men.

Niagara County Department of Health holds STD clinics every Monday and Wednesday (except on national holidays) from 10:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. The clinic is located on the first floor of the Trott Access Center, 1001 11th Street, Niagara Falls, New York. Specialized staff provides counseling, education and testing for STDs and HIV. Services are confidential and free of charge.

To learn more about STDs including HIV, visit www.nyhealth.gov. For more information about STD testing, contact the Niagara County Department of Health at (716) 278-1900 or visit http://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Nu_transmitted.asp. To find other testing sites in your area, visit www.hivtest.org. Additional information and activities for the 2009 STD Awareness Month can be found online at www.cdcnpin.org/stdawareness.