



Promoting Sexual Health  
Through STD Prevention

[NCSDDC.ORG](https://www.ncsddc.org)

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July 11, 2023

Honorable Mandy Cohen  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Director Cohen:

We, the forty-eight undersigned organizations representing multi sector national leaders and public health organizations, are writing to bring to your attention the detrimental effect that the \$400 million rescission of Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) funds, contained in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, will have in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. We are requesting that as fiscal year 2023 comes to a close, that any unspent end-of-year funds be used to restore a portion of the DIS rescission.

In order to intervene in infectious disease outbreaks such as sexually transmitted infectious (STIs), HIV, COVID-19, the highly trained DIS workforce identifies people who may not be aware that they have an infection, connects individuals with testing and treatment, and counsels individuals on prevention. This workforce played a lifesaving role during COVID-19, helped affected communities respond quickly to last year's mpox outbreak, and continue to combat the rising rates of congenital syphilis.

Since the height of COVID-19, the CDC has provided \$600 million to states and local jurisdictions to build up the DIS workforce. By 2026, the program was estimated to support 3,000 DIS workers across the country. If the CDC is unable to restore the funding gaps created by the rescission the following will occur:

- **The workforce created by the federal investment will be dismantled.** In a matter of months, the vast majority of those 3,000 positions could be eliminated, which would immediately endanger the sexual health of the communities they serve.
- **The nation will be less prepared to respond to existing and future outbreaks.** It took time to stand up this expanded workforce after funding was provided in the American Rescue Plan Act. A rapid scale back of the DIS workforce would limit our ability to respond to existing and future COVID-like outbreaks.
- **Inequities in disease incidence and care will be compounded.** STIs, which are at all-time highs in the United States for the eighth year in a row, disproportionately impact racial minorities due to syndemic social conditions. Eliminating the majority of DIS—who are in and of the communities they serve—will be devastating to our work to reduce these inequities.

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Without the investment in the DIS workforce, the nation will be left unprepared to combat current infectious disease outbreaks and to address unknown outbreaks that could occur in the future. We request that the CDC work to ensure adequate funding be provided to protect the health of our people.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Rachel Deitch at the National Coalition of STD Directors with any questions. She can be reached at [rdeitch@ncsddc.org](mailto:rdeitch@ncsddc.org) or 847-804-6672.

Sincerely,

National Coalition of STD Directors  
Act Now: End AIDS (ANEA) Coalition  
African American Health Alliance  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Foundation Chicago  
AIDS United  
Alliance Care 360  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
APLA Health  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
AVAC  
Big Cities Health Coalition  
Black Public Health Academy  
Chicago Women's AIDS Project  
Equality California  
Equality Federation  
Fenway Health  
Fenway Institute  
Georgia AIDS Coalition  
HIV Dental Alliance  
Howard Brown Health  
Human Rights Campaign  
Illinois Public Health Association  
JSI  
Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center  
Life Is Work  
McAlpine Consulting for Growth, LLC  
NASTAD  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association



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National Health Law Program  
National Working Positive Coalition  
NMAC (National Minority AIDS Council)  
PrEP4All  
Project VIDA Inc.  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change  
The AIDS Institute  
THRIVE SS, Inc.  
Treatment Action Group  
U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus



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