NEWS RELEASE
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Become informed about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April is STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise public awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases on the lives of Americans and the importance of individuals discussing sexual health with their health care providers, and if sexually active, their partners.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 4 Americans have an STD.

"STDs are a risk to Alabamians of all ages and in all walks of life and are a major public health issue in the United States and in Alabama," Mary Scisney, nurse consultant with the Alabama Department of Public Health, said. "Many individuals become infected without knowing it and then transmit the infection to their partners."

* The CDC estimates that there are approximately 19 million new cases of STDs each year, almost half of them among young people ages 15 to 24.

* There are physical and psychological impacts. Untreated, some STDs can lead to serious health consequences, including infertility.

Many of those who are infected do not know it because many STDs do not have any symptoms. The only way to know for sure whether a person has an STD is to get tested.

For more information call the National STD Hotline: 1-800-227-8922. Assistance is available from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. central time, Monday through Friday or visit one of Alabama's 67 county health departments. To find a location in Alabama, check the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at http://www.adph.org.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is encouraging organizations to promote individual involvement and develop events and activities to raise awareness of STDs by hosting or sponsoring a special event for STD Awareness Month in April - ***Protect Yourself. Protect Your Partner.***

Resources and information to assist in efforts to educate, motivate, and mobilize local communities in the prevention of STDs are available at http://www.cdc.gov/std.

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