

**For Immediate Release**

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**AMERICAN SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES ASSOCIATION CALLS  
FOR ACTION ON GONORRHEA CRISIS**

**April 12, 2007...**Following today's press announcement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that treatment options for gonorrhea are fast disappearing, the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA) issued a strong statement calling for increased research into new treatments, and more attention to evidence-based prevention. According to Jeanne Marrazzo MD, MPH, President of ASTDA, "With the loss of flouoroquinolones as a treatment option for gonorrhea throughout the U.S., we are running out of effective treatments for this preventable disease. Neither providers nor our patients can afford to wait for the country to take action on this public health crisis. At this point, we are down to our last realistic antibiotic choice for treatment of gonorrhea."

ASTDA joined the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) in calling for better funded research to develop new treatments for the disease. According to both organizations, the emergence of this new gonorrhea "superbug" is a consequence of incorrect or indiscriminant use of antibiotics, leading to the appearance of other dangerous infections, including methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which can be life-threatening; *Acinetobacter baumannii*, which can lead fatal drug-resistant infections; and vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus faecium* (VRE), a major cause of bloodstream infections, infections of the heart, meningitis, and intra-abdominal infections.

In making today's statement, ASTDA also applauded the CDC for its ability to monitor and recognize a major public health problem early enough to take appropriate steps as they did today. According to ASTDA's past President, Jonathan M. Zenilman M.D., Professor of Medicine and Chief, Infectious Diseases Division at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, "This represents a major success for public health surveillance (monitoring of disease) in the U.S., due to our ability to recognize a major public health problem before it became a major clinical problem."

"Those of us who have made the study, treatment, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) our life's work congratulate the nation's public health system for their success in this early warning system," he went on to say. "STD's are a real and present threat to the health and well-being of all of our citizens. We need to realize this and reallocate our research and focus effectively, as the CDC has done in this instance."

ASTDA is an organization devoted to the control and study of sexually transmitted diseases. Its objectives are to support the control and ultimate eradication of STD; to support research in all aspects of STD, including medical, epidemiologic, laboratory, social and behavioral studies; to recognize outstanding contributions in STD control; and to disseminate authoritative information concerning STD.