

# ASTDA Position Papers and Statements Guidelines

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**American  
Sexually  
Transmitted  
Diseases  
Association**

## ***Introduction***

The American Sexually Transmitted Diseases' (ASTDA) position papers and position statements reflect the opinions and recommendations of ASTDA. These papers and statements have been approved by ASTDA's Board and Executive Committee and are published in the *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* journal. Position papers and statements that appear on the ASTDA website are available for non-commercial use by the public, and permission is hereby granted to download, reproduce, reprint and distribute these position papers and statements provided that in each instance the ASTDA paper/statement is clearly and correctly identified with its full title and, if applicable, the citation to its publication in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. ASTDA position papers and statements may not be reproduced, reprinted or distributed for resale or other commercial purposes without the express permission of ASTDA. The ASTDA has formulated its 'Position Papers and Statements Guidelines' using a modified version of the approach summarized in the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine's "Guidelines for Positions" document.

## ***Position Papers and Statements***

Position papers/statements reflect the opinions and recommendations of the ASTDA on important issues relevant to the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections. Position papers and statements encompass policy issues as well as clinical and scientific topics.

Position papers/statements are developed by members and invited non-members of ASTDA on behalf of the Association.

- Position papers present in-depth analysis and description of ASTDA's position on certain issues. Position papers do not exceed 3000 words
- Position statements represent a more concise explanation of ASTDA's position on issues that are of lesser complexity. Position statements do not exceed 1500 words

## ***Purpose***

- Explain an opinion or justify a recommendation on issues relevant to the mission/objectives of ASTDA that may be controversial, need clarification, or represent an issue deserving advocacy from ASTDA
- Provide direction to facilitate appropriate action from ASTDA members, other professionals, policymakers, and the public
- Make evidence-based (or expert consensus when evidence is not available) recommendations that could guide policy development, clinical management, surveillance, prevention or control of STIs

## ***Process***

ASTDA position papers/statements are developed by the ASTDA Board of Directors or by ASTDA members and may be developed or drafted by invited non-members whose expertise is deemed necessary. The process begins with the submission of a Concept Sheet. A 'Position Paper/Statement Concept Sheet' is the mechanism by which the ASTDA Board of Directors approves the initiation and coordination of position paper/statement development. The Concept Sheet is a standardized form that identifies the topic of the position paper/statement, the need, the methodology to be used, and the authoring group. A representative of the ASTDA Board of Directors will be assigned to each Concept Sheet that is submitted (if not submitted by a member of the Board). That ASTDA Board representative will determine if the proposed position materials are complete and will recommend changes to the proposal as needed prior to Concept Sheet Board review. If

changes are required, the assigned representative will return the proposal to the lead author. If no changes are necessary, the ASTDA Board representative will forward the proposal to the members of the ASTDA Board. The proposal must be approved by the ASTDA Board (3/4 of the Board must approve for the proposal to move forward) before a draft of the position paper is developed. Concept Sheets must be submitted to the ASTDA Board by January 5<sup>th</sup> or July 5<sup>th</sup> annually to be considered. Urgent topics may be addressed in real-time.

All authors on Position Papers/Statements must be ASTDA members. The lead author may request that a non-member consultant be added with Board representative approval. An authoring group includes persons who have met the authorship criteria provided below. The authoring group should represent the diversity, interdisciplinary nature and geographic spread of the Association. To be listed as an author, the individual must meet the following criteria:

- Has made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the positions; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data supporting the position
- Drafted the work or made revisions critically important to the intellectual content
- Provided final approval prior to submission
- Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work by ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved

Individuals who participated in the development of the paper but did not meet all of the above mentioned criteria shall be acknowledged at the end of the paper as contributors.

A Financial Disclosure Form must be signed by all authors prior to developing a position paper/statement for the ASTDA. The authoring group of the proposal and draft position paper/statement must disclose all conflicts of interest and affiliations with industry, government, and others. All authors of position papers must disclose all financial interests or relationships within the past five years and the foreseeable future that are relevant to the subject matter or content of the position paper. Disclosure forms will be maintained by the ASTDA.

Completed drafts of position papers are to be submitted to ASTDA Board via the Board representative within six months of approval of the proposal by the Board. Otherwise, a letter of justification for the delay, a new proposal, or a request to withdraw the proposal must be submitted to the Board. If a position paper has not been submitted within six months and there is no letter of justification for the delay then the proposal is considered null and void.

### *Structure*

Position Papers/Statements should include most of the following elements (substantial deviations from the format listed below should be discussed with the Board representative prior to drafting the document):

**Title:** The title must reflect the intent/purpose of the positions clearly and concisely.

**Highlighted Summary:** A brief 3-5 sentence summary of the most important take home points from the position paper.

**Abstract:** A concise paragraph (300 words maximum) which includes reason/purpose and summary of the overall concept(s) of the position paper.

**Background Information:** This section should serve as an introductory section of the position paper, where the authors provide a concise overview of the topic and why it is important.

Method(s): This section should outline the methodology used to develop and substantiate the positions stated in the position paper (i.e. systematic review of the literature and/or expert consensus).

Body of the Paper: The body of the paper should provide up-to-date evidence-based information or expert consensus which provides justification for each of the stated positions. This section should be organized with each position as a header followed by the evidence or expert consensus which supports the position.

Authors: Members of the authoring group, their affiliations, and disclosures are listed at the end of each position paper.

References: The references serve as the scientific justification and should be peer-reviewed research articles, public policy documents or state-of-the-art articles or books from the literature. References should be formatted according to the current requirements of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.

### *Review Process*

All position papers/statements shall be submitted to the entire ASTDA Board for review by the Board representative. After peer review, the representative will return the paper to the authors for revisions. The authors are expected to respond to peer-review comments with a detailed explanation of responses and changes within four weeks. The revised manuscript with responses to peer reviewers will be redistributed to members of the Board for a second review. The Board representative will then upload this version of the manuscript to a password-protected Google document and a link to that document will be sent by e-mail to the ASTDA membership for comments. The comment period will last 30 days. Comments from ASTDA members at large will be shared with the authors who will have to respond. Responses and any changes to the manuscript will be shared with the Board members via the Board representative. Three quarters (3/4) of the Board must approve the final text. The Board representative will then submit the final version of the manuscript to *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.

### *Revisions*

Authors and their respective authoring groups will be expected to conduct a review of their position paper/statement when older than five years from initial publication. In addition, the ASTDA Board may request a review of a position paper/statement prior to the mandatory review timeline if there have been significant changes to the content of the current position paper under consideration. If the ASTDA Board recommends revising the position paper, then the most recent lead author will be contacted by a member of the Board. The lead author will contact their authoring group and notify them of the ASTDA Board's request to revise. If the lead author can no longer take on this responsibility, they will recommend an ASTDA member who can. If the newly-identified lead author is approved by the ASTDA Board, the individual will confirm that the most recent authoring group is interested in participating in the revision. If this is not the case, the new lead author can identify other group members. The authoring group will have 6 months to submit the revised position paper to the ASTDA Board.