

Dear DCPS Parent/Guardian,

September 2016

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Department of Health (DOH) place the health and well-being of our school-aged students as one of our most important priorities. As agency partners, we work hand in hand to ensure our students are healthy throughout the school year, and yet still, some youth may face health issues. Fortunately, many of these issues can be addressed and even cured if diagnosed and treated early on.

As in prior years, DCPS and DOH will offer free, confidential, and voluntary sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening and treatment for all high school students. The screenings and treatments are provided under the direction of a licensed clinician. When DOH and its partners come to your child's school this school year, the following will occur:

- 1) Students will first take part in a brief presentation on chlamydia and gonorrhea and how to prevent them.
- 2) Afterwards, they will be given a bag containing a sterilized cup, and be directed to go the bathroom and privately decide whether to provide a urine sample for the screening test, or not.*
- 3) The bags are then collected by DOH-sponsored staff, and tested later at an off-site location.
- 4) Within two weeks, students may call DOH to learn the test result. However, if a student has chlamydia or gonorrhea, the student will be contacted by DOH, and can receive free treatment at DOH's STI Clinic or by DOH when they return to their school for treatment day.**
- 5) Students seeking treatment by DOH at school or at the STI clinic will also be offered rapid HIV test, a urine pregnancy test and information on family planning. In the rare occasion that a student tests preliminarily positive for HIV, DOH staff will counsel and connect the student to appropriate medical care.

In addition to the initial screening at the school, DOH may host a "pop-up clinic" at the school during the spring to offer chlamydia and gonorrhea testing to students who either have missed the opportunity to test the first time, or would like be tested again to know their current status.

We thank you in advance for your partnership and cooperation. DCPS and DOH are dedicated to providing our youth accurate health information and services. DOH is testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea because these are serious infections that often have no symptoms, and, if not treated, can make it difficult, or even impossible to have children. We also know that having a sexually transmitted infection makes it easier to contract HIV. We believe that all students can benefit from this program, and encourage you to take a few minutes to speak with your child about human sexuality, including prevention and consequences of STIs.

DC law is very clear that all test results are strictly confidential and are only given to the student, not the parent or guardian. If you have any questions, please contact DOH's HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration at 202-727-9860 or DCPS's Division of Student Wellness at 202-724-1505.

Sincerely,

Diana K. Bruce

Director of Health and Wellness

** DC Minor Health Consent Regulation (DCMR 22) allows youth ages 12 years and older to consent to sexual health services, substance abuse counseling, and mental health services without parental notification.*

*** A dose of azithromycin (taken orally) will be used to treat chlamydia, and gonorrhea will be treated with a dual therapy of azithromycin (taken orally) and ceftriaxone (administered by injection). Possible side effects include: pain, tenderness, hardness, or warmth at the injection site, upset stomach, diarrhea, loss of appetite, headache, dizziness, sweating, nausea, and vomiting. Allergic reactions to these medications are rare. In addition to being monitored by providers for any of these signs, a light snack is provided to decrease the likelihood of these symptoms.*