In April, two national communication campaigns were announced: the GYT09 (Get Yourself Tested) campaign for STD Awareness Month, as well as the first domestic HIV prevention campaign in more than a decade, Act Against AIDS. CDC provided technical support to the GYT09 campaign, developed by MTV and Kaiser Family Foundation working with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other organizations nationwide. The Act Against AIDS campaign, announced on April 7th, is a multi-phased national communication campaign. The first phase is intended to directly confront complacency around HIV here in the United States and put the HIV crisis back on the national radar screen. Both campaigns have already seen extensive media coverage.

Act Against AIDS
On April 7th, the White House, Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, and national partner organizations came together for an event to announce a new five-year national communication campaign, Act Against AIDS. The campaign’s first phase, “Nine and a Half Minutes,” highlights the unacceptable statistic that every nine-and-a-half minutes another person in the United States becomes infected with HIV. The campaign uses a series of video, audio, print and online materials to increase knowledge about the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States. Other phases of the campaign will use targeted messages and outreach to reach the populations most severely affected by HIV. An early focus will be African Americans, extending over time to other communities disproportionately impacted by HIV and AIDS, including men who have sex with men and Latinos.

Also announced was the Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative (AAALI), which brings together 14 of the nation’s leading African American organizations in a $10-million, five-year partnership with CDC to integrate HIV prevention into their outreach programs. Kaiser Family Foundation is also partnering with CDC to engage the media and entertainment industries. As of April 20th, the campaign has generated 37 million media impressions, including major media sources like CNN, The New York Times, and The Tavis Smiley Radio Show, as well as blogs.

During the event, Jeff Crowley, director, White House Office of National AIDS Policy, and Melody Barnes, director, White House Domestic Policy Council, conveyed a renewed focus and urgency to combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic in this country, including strong support for a national HIV/AIDS strategy. We look forward to being a part of this renewed leadership focused on domestic HIV prevention.

Hepatitis Awareness Month
May 2009 marks the 14th anniversary of Hepatitis Awareness Month, with World Hepatitis Day on May 19th. These annual observances raise awareness about the domestic and global impact of viral hepatitis and the importance of preventing hepatitis-related liver disease including liver cancer.

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver and refers to a group of viral infections that affects the liver. The most common types — hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C — are three different, contagious liver diseases caused by three unrelated viruses. Worldwide, up to 500 million people are infected with hepatitis — many of whom don’t know they are infected. With early detection, many of these people can get lifesaving care and treatment that can limit disease progression, prevent cancer deaths, and help break the cycle of unknowing transmissions to others. A new surveillance report is slated to be published soon. For more information on Hepatitis Month Activities, please visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.