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Greetings ASTDA Members!

It has been a year since I took office as President and there are many important things going on with ASTDA that I want to share with you. As you are no doubt aware, there have been many changes in our working environment over the past year some of which are positive (e.g. additional funding support as a result of the End HIV Initiative) and some of which are not (e.g. increasing numbers of state laws that are harmful to women's sexual & reproductive health). It is with attention to this context that our Association has developed a Mission Statement, revised our Objectives and clarified our core values in terms of commitments that we as an association can make to the field. I share them with you here and encourage you to go to the website www.ASTDA.org (if you are not already reading this on the website!)

ASTDA's Mission is to foster scientific knowledge, develop leadership and champion practice in the field of sexually transmitted infections.

ASTDA's Objectives are to:

- To control, prevent, and ultimately eradicate sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- To support research in all aspects of STI including medical, epidemiologic, laboratory, social and behavioral studies
- To recognize outstanding contributions in STI control and prevention
- To disseminate authoritative information concerning STI
- To develop the current and future generations of STI professionals
- To promote social justice as an antidote to the structural determinants of STI risk

ASTDA's Commitments are that:

- We demand rigorous science adhering to the highest ethical standards.
- We promote a sex-positive sexual health framework.
- We are committed to an STI workforce and ASTDA membership comprised of professionals with a wide range of roles and experiences.
- We value a culture of inclusion, equity, safety, professionalism, and respect.
- We recognize social justice as a core value for addressing STI.

As I mentioned above, the website is now a place that we encourage you to go for the latest updates about the Association (and to become a member if you are not one or refer colleagues so that they can become members). We have improved the functionality and the content of the website and hope that it will now become a site that you visit often as we are updating it frequently.

We have also simplified the membership structure. Since ASTDA now serves as the operational arm of the North American Branch of the International Union Against STIs (IUSTI-NA), we have harmonized the ASTDA and IUSTI membership periods so that they both begin on 1 January and go through 31 December of each calendar year. ***Remember – your ASTDA membership gives you automatic IUSTI membership which provides substantial discounts for many meetings!*** Of course your membership also gives you a ***subscription to the Sexually Transmitted Diseases journal*** which you can access through our website.

In July, ASTDA presented a bid to host the 2023 International Society for STD Research (ISSTD) in Chicago. We were successful in our effort to bring this meeting back to the US for the first time since 2007! See the website for additional details about this exciting opportunity for the Association to showcase itself and support our mission of dissemination of research findings as well as to foster development of leadership in our field.

At the most recent ISSTD meeting (held in Vancouver in July), we were able to fund several scholarships for travel. IUSTI-NA/Canada branch & ASTDA held a young investigator's workshop with the intent of bringing early career stage investigators and public health professionals together with academic colleagues and industry representatives to provide mentorship. Breakfast sessions were also supported by ASTDA to provide an opportunity for early stage career professionals to meet with experts and discuss common concerns regarding publishing, obtaining funding, and addressing sexual and gender harassment/inequalities in our workplaces. ***We will continue to offer such opportunities at future national and international meetings so if you are interested, or have a mentee who may benefit from these sessions, please check the website for more details regarding these opportunities as we approach these meeting dates.***

In other news, we have updated the Association's By-laws so be expecting to see a request for approval that will be sent out to all members in the upcoming weeks. 2020 will be a Board election year so be thinking about who you may want to nominate (including yourself!) If you don't see emails about Association news – please check the website!

We are looking forward to a productive year and hope to continue to build & expand our community in the field of STI research, control & prevention.



Barbara Van Der Pol, PhD, MPH
Professor of Medicine, UAB School of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine
Director, Infectious Diseases Laboratory
President, ASTDA
President-Elect, International Society for STD Research