



10<sup>th</sup> November 2006

In response to the announcement of the Government's new sexual health campaign, Dr Simon Barton, President, **British Association For Sexual Health & HIV (BASHH)** commented:

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"We are pleased that sexual health continues to be recognised as a priority in the UK and this campaign will go some way to putting this very important issue at the forefront of people's minds.

"If the campaign is successful, there will be heightened public awareness of the risks and consequences of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and this will hopefully translate into a significant reduction in risk behaviour. Although this may lead to a reduction in future infections, it is also likely to lead to an increase in the demand for testing for STIs.

"BASHH strongly supports the Government's commitment to this campaign as it was announced in the Choosing Health White Paper. However, the funding committed by the Government to achieve the other sexual health aims in the White Paper has failed to reach many frontline services. It is essential that Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities give the same priority to sexual health that the Government has and ensure that the necessary resources to meet the increased attendances at GUM and sexual health services is provided. Without this targeted Government money getting to where it was intended, the value of the campaign to increase awareness will not be accompanied by the increases in access to testing and diagnosis of STIs that are a public health NHS priority target.

"BASHH continues to stress the urgent need for the appropriate allocation of funds for front line services and we look forward to working with the Department of Health to address this issue and to implement their new campaign."

- Ends -

If you would like to speak to Simon Barton or one of the other regional BASHH consultants please contact Efe Abebe or Catherine Wrigley on 020 7815 3905/01 or email:

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