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GUM SERVICES COMPROMISED BY POOR ACCESS TO CHOOSING HEALTH FUNDING

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In response to the survey by the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health & HIV (IAG), Dr Simon Barton, President, **British Association For Sexual Health & HIV (BASHH)** commented:

“Not only was sexual health made one of the top six national priorities for the NHS in 2006/7¹, but **48 hrs access to Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics** was specifically highlighted as a key priority. Yet we are still seeing inappropriate allocation of funds for these services, as expressed by 40 PCTs in the survey, and GUM clinicians at the frontline of sexual health services continue to work under extreme pressure to meet both the national targets for access and their local population’s needs.”

“The increase in the number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, syphilis, genital warts and genital herpes, as reported by the recent HPA findings, is a clear indication of the urgent need for immediate and appropriate funding of sexual health services in the UK. BASHH has consistently stressed that improving sexual health services and tackling waiting times is an essential part of disease prevention as failure to treat infections promptly – or at all in some cases – means that untreated patients who remain sexually active, can further increase the transmission of STIs.”

“By poor prioritisation of government funding of these services, we are increasingly at risk of putting the sexual health of the nation in danger and continuing to fuel this public health crisis.”

“It is crucial that the additional resources allocated by the government to improve capacity in sexual health services is made available to front line services such as GUM clinics as they often serve as the first port of call for many people with concerns, symptoms or signs of STIs and HIV. We need to make sure people can be seen as quickly as possible and in the service of their choice.”

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¹ The NHS in England: The Operating framework for 2006/7
http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PressReleases/PressReleasesNotices/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4127249&chk=%2BnBex5

