

# Covering New York City in latex: increasing condom access

Angelica Bocour, MPH; Tamar Renaud, MPH; Daniel Weglein, MD, MPH; George de Stefano, MSW; Elizabeth Begier, MD, MPH; Scott Kellerman, MD, MPH  
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York, NY, USA

## BACKGROUND

- Condoms are the most effective, practicable means of lowering the risk of sexually transmitted HIV infection. Condom distribution and social marketing have been estimated to save millions of dollars due to infections averted.<sup>[1]</sup> In 2004 in New York City only 61% of persons with more than one partner reported using a condom at last sex.<sup>[2]</sup>

- The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (NYCDOHMH) Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control intensified its efforts to increase condom use and in June 2005, launched the Free Condom Initiative to rapidly scale up the availability of condoms through an easy-to-use website. As part of this initiative, water-based lubricant was also offered for distribution.

- The website was advertised by email blasts to hundreds of organizations. Refinements to further streamline web-based ordering for organizations were made in January 2006.

- DOHMH Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinics distribute condoms in their clinics and the District Public Health Offices (DPHOs) distribute condoms in neighborhood small businesses, such as beauty parlors, nail salons and small hotels and motels.

Bedimo, AL, Pinkerton, SD, Cohen DA, Gray, B, Farley, TA.  
Condom distribution: a cost-utility analysis. International Journal of STD & AIDS 2002; 13: 384-392.  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. 2004 Community Health Survey.

## METHODS

- A simple, well-publicized website was launched in June 2005 to facilitate on-line condom and lubricant ordering for NYC community-based organizations (CBOs), hospitals and private practitioners, schools, universities and businesses.

- Previously ordering was limited to STD and HIV providers.

- Condoms are delivered directly to ordering organizations within ten days of order.

- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene staff were assigned to canvass neighborhood venues to increase distribution.

- We tracked number of condoms distributed by ordering organization type and location.

## LIMITATIONS

The online condom ordering system was streamlined as of January 2006. Prior to this system, classification of organization type was not elicited. The data presented for Table 3, Condoms Distributed by Organization Type, is from January 2006 to June 2006.

Presented at the XVI  
International  
AIDS Conference  
13-18 August 2006  
Toronto, Canada

## RESULTS

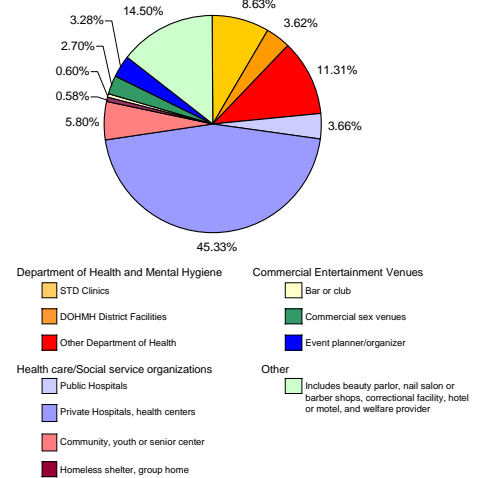
### 1. Number of Condoms and Lubricant Distributed

July 2005-June 2006	Condoms	Lubricant
Average per month	1,480,833	514,438
Total Condoms	17,770,000	6,173,250

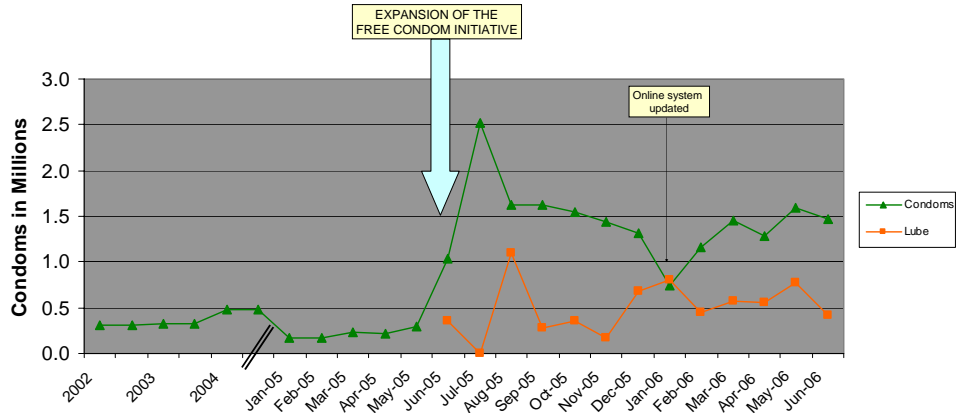
### 2. Number of Condoms Distributed in high prevalence neighborhoods and NYC

Neighborhood	Total number of condoms distributed	Average number of condoms per month per 100 males age 13 and over*
Central Brooklyn	1,830,937	68
Chelsea-Clinton	1,424,524	198
South Bronx	3,014,968	149
Central/East Harlem	2,016,437	177
New York City	17,770,000	48

### 3. Condoms Ordered by Organization Type

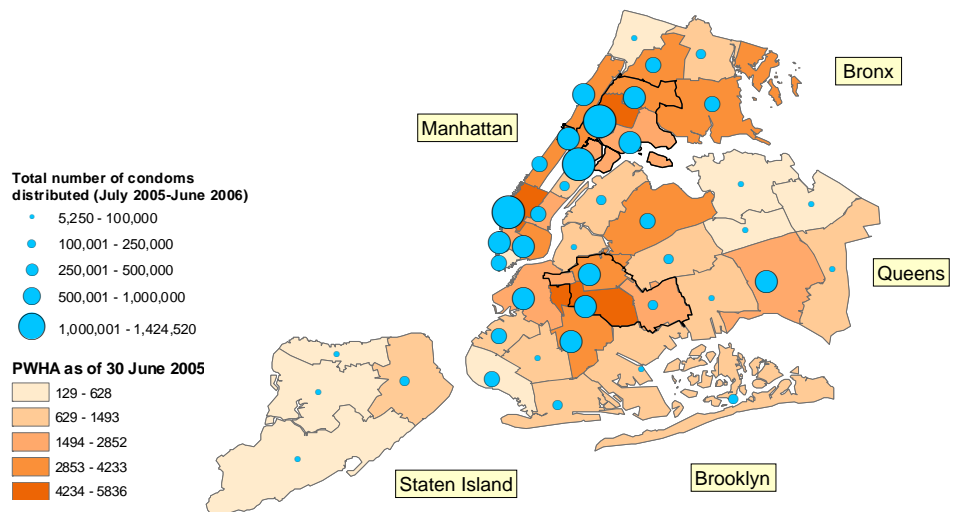


### 4. Condoms and Lubricant Distributed by Month



- The peak seen in July 2005 is due to the launch of the ordering system in mid-June 2005.
- Lubricant was not distributed in July due to problems with stock depletion. Orders placed in July were delivered in August.
- The lubricant supplier was unable to meet demand. In January 2006 a new distributor was contracted.

### 5. Number of Condoms distributed by United Hospital Fund (UHF)



## CONCLUSIONS

Web-based condom and lubricant ordering facilitated citywide access to inexpensive and effective HIV prevention tools. Next steps include surveys to evaluate whether increased access led to increased use. Distinctive packaging is being developed to further advertise and facilitate evaluation of this initiative.