

Eliminating Syphilis Jefferson County (Louisville), Kentucky

Why is Syphilis Elimination in the U.S. within our reach now?

- Syphilis is a preventable and curable sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Infectious syphilis is at the lowest rate ever reported: 2.6 cases/100,000 population (6,993 total cases).
- Syphilis is now very concentrated; half of all new cases in 1998 were reported from only 28 counties, which represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Jefferson County?

- **In 1998 Jefferson County ranked 14th in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (91 cases) and had a rate 5 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
S Over 90% of cases are among minorities.
- **To decrease spread of HIV infection**
S Syphilis increases HIV transmission at least 2-to-5 fold.
- **To improve infant health**
S Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy causing stillbirths or congenital infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.
S In 1998, 4 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Jefferson County for a rate of 41.0 cases/100,000 births, 2 times higher than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.

Infectious Syphilis — Kentucky, 1998



- 0 cases reported
- Rate ≤ 4/100,000*
- Rate > 4/100,000*
- One of 28 counties reporting half of new cases in the U.S.

* Healthy People 2000 objective is 4/100,000

1998 U.S. rate: 2.6 cases/100,000 population

Jefferson County Responds

- Jefferson County Health Department has developed a community coalition in Louisville that includes representatives from churches, homeless shelters, public housing authority officials and members of the visiting nurses association. The primary function of the coalition is to build program capacity in high morbidity areas to conduct out-reach, disperse STD information, and encourage testing.

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<http://www.cdc.gov/StopSyphilis/>



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