



June 4, 2020

Dear Partners in Prevention,

A [new CDC report](#) finds **1 in 2 newborn syphilis cases in the United States occur due to gaps in testing and treatment during prenatal care**. Researchers analyzed these and other commonly missed opportunities that prevent congenital syphilis, or syphilis passed from mother-to-baby during pregnancy. Data show cases occur when moms:

- Are not tested early during prenatal care (10%);
- Are diagnosed but not adequately treated for syphilis (31%); or
- Acquired syphilis later in pregnancy after an initial negative test (11%).

While most failures occur while women *are* receiving some level of prenatal care, **1 in 4 cases occur when mothers have no timely prenatal care**. Commonly **missed opportunities also differed by region**, which underscores the importance of tailoring prevention solutions to the needs of affected communities.

Despite the [dramatic rise in congenital syphilis cases](#) (up 261% from 2013-18) and deaths (94 in 2018 alone), **simple testing and treatment saves lives**. Healthcare providers should follow [CDC's testing and treatment recommendations](#) to help; however, the resurgence of syphilis and congenital syphilis cannot be tackled in the exam room alone. Closing the prevention gaps will require [action from everyone](#): CDC, health departments, healthcare providers, community leaders, universities and industry, individuals, and the healthcare system at large.

Finally, I know many of you, myself included, are taking part in the COVID-19 response. I also know that the [record-high STD burden](#) will not patiently sit by, which is why I'm bringing these data to your attention. Thank you for your hard work and dedication in these unprecedented times, and for helping keep an eye on developments affecting our "typical" everyday work.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail Bolan".

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