



April 28, 2017

Dear Colleague,

As we close the door on another STD Awareness Month, I am pleased to announce the release of [*CDC's Call to Action: Let's Work Together to Stem the Tide of Rising Syphilis in the United States.*](#)

CDC's Division of STD Prevention is calling on public and private sectors, as well as affected communities, to help reduce syphilis through research, prevention, and outreach.

Historically low syphilis rates are in the rearview mirror, and today, we face increasing syphilis rates across almost every demographic. Of utmost concern is the continued high rate among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, as well as a sudden surge of congenital syphilis rates.

We must act now to disrupt syphilis. And we need for everyone to pitch in with specific action steps encouraged in the Call to Action. For example:

- **Public health departments** need to improve surveillance; partner with healthcare providers and patient advocacy groups; conduct partner services; increase screening; and ensure collaboration between State and local STD, HIV and maternal and child public health programs.
- **Healthcare Providers** need to take complete sexual histories; follow CDC testing recommendations; treat diagnosed patients immediately per CDC guidelines; and work with the health department to report all cases of syphilis by stage, including cases of congenital syphilis.
- **Decision-makers and community leaders** need to talk to STD program professionals in their jurisdiction and address any policy barriers to affected populations seeking or obtaining recommended screening and treatment.

While getting back to the basics of syphilis prevention will help make a difference, it will not put a full stop to this disease. For these reasons, the Call to Action also outlines action steps needed from affected communities, universities, industry, and even electronic medical records vendors.

I understand that we're asking for a lot from everyone; however, we're committed to undoing these worsening syphilis trends with you.

CDC pledges to unite and strengthen new and old tools of prevention to protect the public from this dangerous disease. We will, for example, improve surveillance; make a syphilis specimen repository available for technological developments; and help develop novel diagnostic tools

and better prevention tools. At the same time, we will continue ongoing work to prevent all STDs, including syphilis.

Together, we can put syphilis behind us where it belongs.

Thank you for your commitment to STD prevention.

Best Regards,
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