

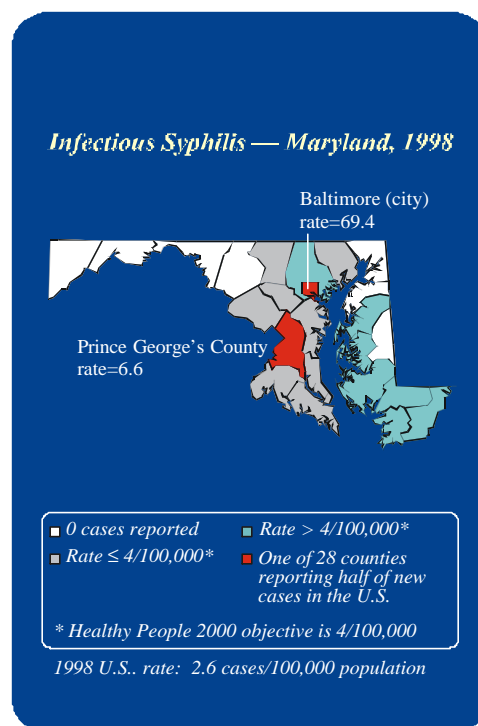
# Eliminating Syphilis Baltimore City, Maryland

## *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 represents less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

## *Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Baltimore City?*

- **In 1998 Baltimore City ranked 1st in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (456 cases) and had a rate nearly 27 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
  - S 96% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
  - S The infectious syphilis rate in Baltimore City for African Americans is nearly 14 times greater than the rate for white Americans.
- **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 syphilis that may result in lifelong health problems.
  - S In 1998, 28 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Baltimore City for a rate of 270 cases/100,000 births, 13 times higher than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.



## *Baltimore City Responds*

- The Syphilis Elimination Plan Working Group, composed of representatives from the affected community, Baltimore City Health Department, laboratories, correctional facilities, managed care organizations, medical centers, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, meets weekly and is responsible for creating and implementing the local syphilis elimination plan.
- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene operates a Stat testing program for syphilis in the Baltimore City Booking and Intake Center (BCBIC).
- A Disease Intervention Specialist from Baltimore City has been assigned to work with Total Health Care, a Federally Qualified Health Center to follow-up on patients who test positive for syphilis.

**For more information contact:**  
Wayne Brathwaite  
Baltimore City Health Department  
(410) 396-4448  
(410) 396-8457 (fax)

**For media inquiries contact:**  
National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Office of Communications  
(404) 639-8895

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



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention

