

Eliminating Syphilis

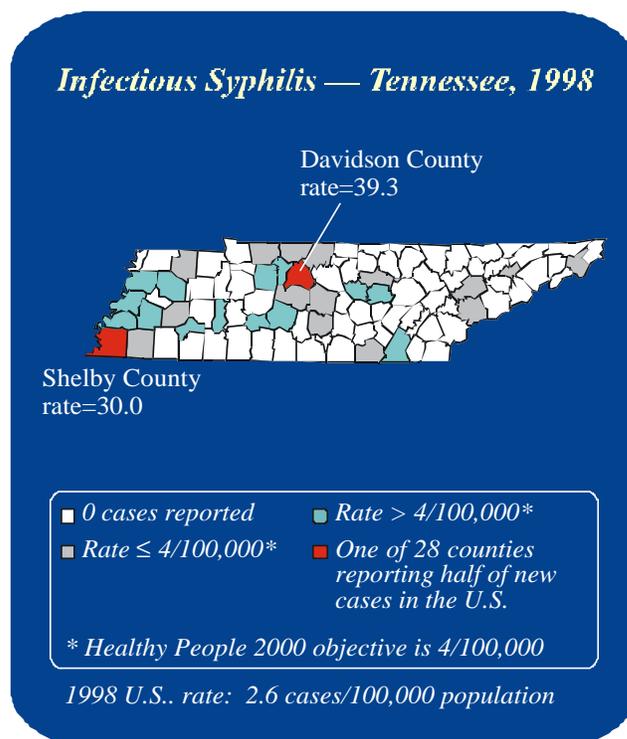
Davidson County (Nashville), Tennessee

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 Davidson County?

- **In 1998 Davidson County ranked 4th in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (210 cases) and had a rate 15 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
 - S 92% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
 - S The infectious syphilis rate in Davidson County for African Americans is 35 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 infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.



Davidson County Responds

- “STD Free!” is a dynamic community coalition formed in October 1998 to address the STD problem in Nashville. Community members and the Metropolitan Health Department staff work together to educate affected communities and organizations about syphilis, its consequences, and prevention techniques.
- A jail screening project tests every person booked at Davidson County Criminal Justice Center for syphilis. This effort will seek to rapidly identify arrested individuals that are infected with syphilis and provide them with appropriate treatment.
- An intensified disease intervention effort conducted in 1999 identified three times the usual number of syphilis cases in one month. This effort included increased staffing, extended clinic hours, and improved surveillance activities.

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



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