Eliminating Syphilis
Lancaster County, South Carolina

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 Lancaster County?
• In 1998 Lancaster County ranked 27th in the nation in new cases of infectious syphilis (47 cases) and had a rate 31 times higher than the national rate.
• To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health:
  • 87% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
  • The infectious syphilis rate in Lancaster County for African Americans is 19 times greater than the rate for white Americans.
• To decrease spread of HIV infection:
  • Syphilis increases HIV transmission at least 2-to-5 fold.
• To improve infant health:
  • Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy causing stillbirths or congenital infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.
  • In 1998, 4 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Lancaster County for a rate of 554.0 cases/100,000 births, 27 times higher than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.

Lancaster County Responds
• Screening of persons at high risk for syphilis is conducted in the local county jail.
• Case prevention efforts have been intensified for all early syphilis cases reported.
• The county health department is visiting private health care providers to inform them of the syphilis problem and the syphilis services provided by the county health department.

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