

# Eliminating Syphilis Orleans Parish (New Orleans), Louisiana

## *Why is Syphilis Elimination in the U.S. within our reach now?*

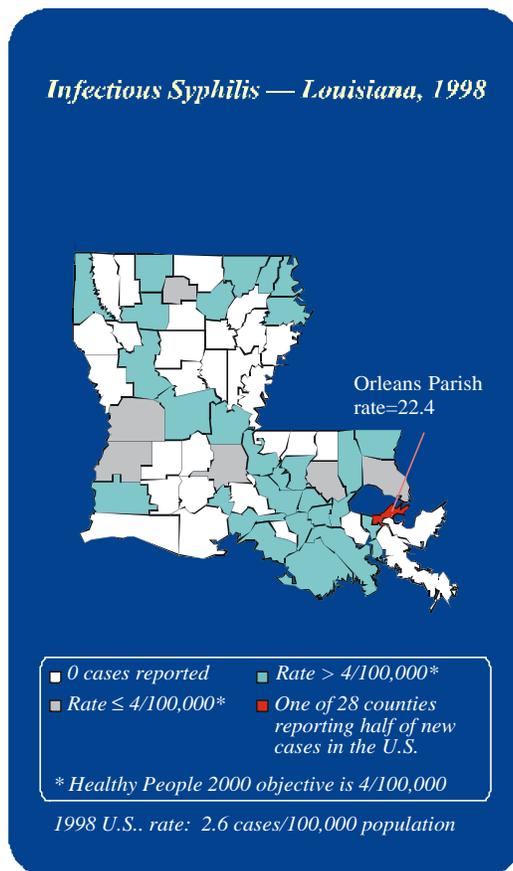
- Syphilis is a preventable and curable sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Infectious syphilis is at the lowest rate ever reported: 2.6 cases/100,000 population (6,993 total cases).
- Syphilis is now very concentrated; half of all new cases in 1998 were reported from only 28 counties, which represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

## *Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Orleans Parish?*

- **In 1998 Orleans Parish ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (105 cases) and had a rate nearly 9 times greater than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
  - S 93% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
  - S The infectious syphilis rate in Orleans Parish for African Americans is 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 infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.
  - S In 1998, 2 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Orleans Parish for a rate of 26.4 cases/100,000 births, compared to the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.

## *Orleans Parish Responds*

- Syphilis elimination activities include community screening and testing for syphilis and HIV in high risk areas and collaborative outreach activities with local community-based organizations. These efforts should improve local rapid detection systems for syphilis.
- Orleans Parish School-Based STD Clinics are an initiative by the Louisiana Office of Public Health with Louisiana State University and seven local senior high schools working together to control sexually transmitted infections among youth.



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