

# Eliminating Syphilis

## Prince George's County, 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 represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

### *Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Prince George's County?*

- **In 1998 Prince George's County ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (51 cases) and had a rate greater than 2 times 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 Prince George's County for African Americans is nearly 30 times greater than the rate for white Americans.

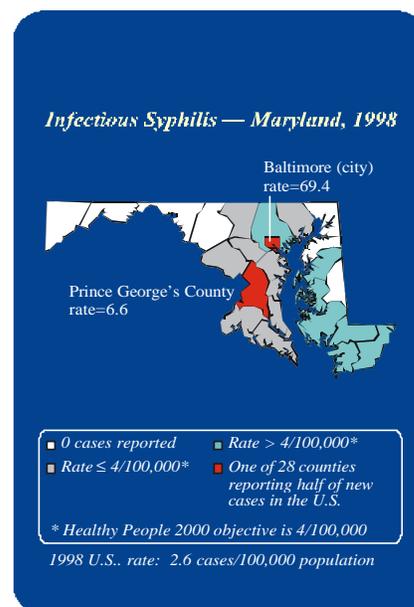
- **To decrease spread of HIV infection**

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, 6 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Prince George's County for a rate of 49.8 cases/100,000 births, greater than 2 times the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.



### *Prince George's County Responds*

- In the past decade, infectious syphilis cases in Prince George's County have been reduced by 92%, from 681 cases in 1990 to 51 cases in 1998.
- Several Health Department activities have led to this reduction:
  - S expanded clinic services to include evening hours several days a week,
  - S an active congenital syphilis surveillance program,
  - S street outreach workers in high incidence areas doing field serologies, distributing condoms, and teaching safer sex practices, and
  - S a Preventive Case Management program that provides STD/HIV education in the Correctional Center and community follow-up upon release.

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



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