Eliminating Syphilis
Robeson County, North 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 Robeson County?
• In 1998 Robeson County ranked 28th in the nation in new cases of infectious syphilis (46 cases) and had a rate greater than 15 times the national rate.
• To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health
  S 50% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally) and 41% are among Native Americans.
  S The infectious syphilis rate in Robeson County for African Americans is 11 times greater and the rate for Native Americans is 5 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, Robeson County had a congenital syphilis rate of 50.9 cases/100,000 births, greater than 2 times the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.

Robeson County Responds
• Syphilis screening occurs within 48 hours of incarceration in Robeson County jail facilities.
• The county health department is in the process of hiring another STD nurse and a syphilis outreach worker.

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