

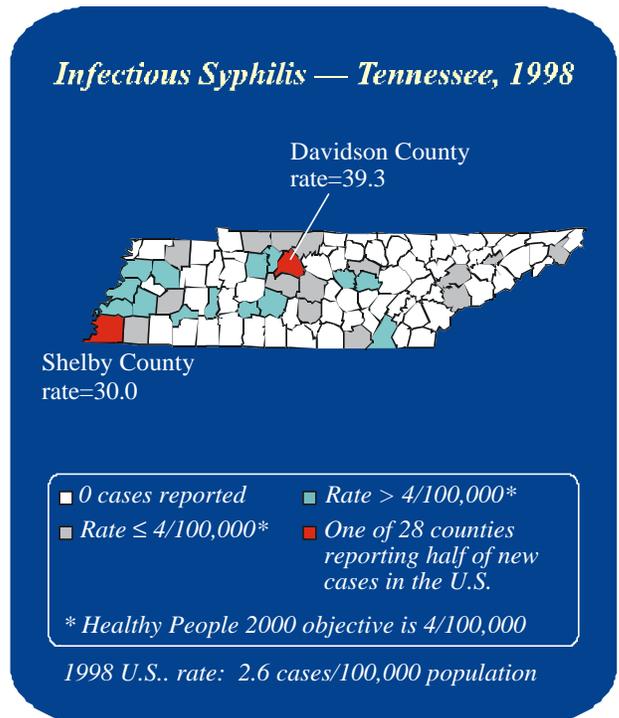
Eliminating Syphilis Shelby County (Memphis), Tennessee

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 Shelby County?

- **In 1998 Shelby County ranked 3rd in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (260 cases) and had a rate 11 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
 - S 97% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
 - S The infectious syphilis rate in Shelby County for African Americans is 40 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, 9 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Shelby County for a rate of 61.3 cases/100,000 births, nearly 3 times higher than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.



Shelby County Responds

- Memphis is currently in the process of establishing a community coalition to promote STD prevention, based on the successful “STD Free!” model developed by Davidson County (Nashville).
- An intensified disease intervention effort is scheduled for October to help further reduce primary and secondary syphilis cases in Shelby County.
- Syphilis screening and treatment services are part of the routine 14 day physical for all persons detained in the Shelby County Criminal Justice Center.

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



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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
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