



December 21, 2007

Dear Syphilis Elimination Coordinators:



Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays. The CDC Syphilis Elimination Effort Coordinating Team wishes each of you joyful holidays and a prosperous new year. We are also delighted to announce the newest member of our team: Mr. David S. Novak, MSW, LICSW, CAS. David has accepted the position of *Syphilis Elimination Program Coordinator* and is scheduled to join us in January 2008. Many of you may already know David from his role as the Syphilis Elimination Coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Health Division of STD Prevention and from his work providing technical assistance with developing Internet-based STD interventions. Please join us in welcoming him to the SEE Coordinating Team!

Status of the Epidemic

The rate of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis decreased throughout the 1990s, leading to the historic decision to launch a National Syphilis Elimination Effort (SEE) in 1999. Our collective early efforts were successful in the initially targeted populations, and we saw reductions between 1999 through 2005 of approximately 95% in P&S syphilis in women, of 92% in congenital syphilis, and in the black:white rate ratio from 28.6:1 to 5.4:1. Unfortunately, over the past 6 years, fueled by new outbreaks among men who have sex with men (MSM), the syphilis rate in the United States has increased. Between 2005 and 2006, the national P&S cases increased from 8,724 to 9,756. The rate of P&S syphilis among men has risen 54% over the past five years (from 3.7 per 100,000 population in 2002 to 5.7 per 100,000 population in 2006), driving overall increases in syphilis rates for the nation. Over time the disparity between male and female case rates has grown until in 2006 the male rate was nearly six times the rate among females. However, it is important to note that the rate among females has also increased over the past two years, following a decade of declines. In addition, the rate of congenital syphilis increased slightly in 2006 (from 8.2 per 100,000 live births in 2005 to 8.5 in 2006). It is too early to determine if the increase among newborns is a trend, but historically increases in congenital syphilis have followed increases among women. So while syphilis remains close to historically low rates in women and infants, the recent reversals of promising trends are cause for concern and call us to maintain vigilant commitment to providing effective syphilis prevention and control services to all affected populations. For more information about the recent data trends, please see the 2006 STD Surveillance Report at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/default.htm>.

Evidence-based Action Planning Update

To better ensure that syphilis prevention and control interventions are evidence-based and targeted to populations with greatest need, in October 2008 CDC instituted the Syphilis Elimination Evidence-based Action Planning (EBAP) process for all project areas receiving SEE funds. The EBAP process is designed to improve program monitoring by promoting better collection and analysis of local surveillance data and individual program performance indicators. CDC has completed a thorough review of each of the action plans submitted for Fiscal Year 2008. The plans submitted by project areas generally described four intervention activities to achieve syphilis prevention and control: 1) outreach screening, 2) partner notification, 3) community partnerships, and 4) provider mobilization. Beginning in January 2008, CDC will be providing reviewers' comments to individual project areas and technical assistance as warranted. For more information about Syphilis Elimination Evidence-based Action Planning please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/STOPLYPHILIS/>.

Available New and Existing Resources

> **2006 STD Surveillance Report**

Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2006 presents statistics and trends for STDs in the US through 2006 and is intended as a reference document for policy makers, program managers, health planners, researchers, and others concerned with the public health implications of these diseases. It is available at online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/default.htm>

> **Consultation to Address STD Disparities in African-American Communities – Meeting Report**

Experts in a variety of fields with diverse perspectives on public health, infectious diseases, and health in African-American communities gathered with CDC policymakers within DSTDP and NCHHSTP at this conference focused on combating the bacterial STDs disproportionately burdening African American communities. The report from this meeting is online available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/general/STDHealthDisparitiesConsultationJune2007.pdf>

> **Program Collaboration and Service Integration: Meeting Report Summary**

The summary includes all materials and presentations from the External Consultation on Program Collaboration and Service Integration (PCSI) held on August 21–22, 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia and is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/programintegration/>

> **“Health Disparities in HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Tuberculosis in the US: Issues, Burden and Response”**

The report presents a retrospective review of CDC surveillance data for HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tuberculosis (TB) over the period of 2000-2004, and summarizes selected programmatic, educational and research activities implemented to reduce disparities in these diseases. It is available at online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/healthdisparities/>.

> **Couples HIV Counseling and Testing (CHCT) Intervention and Training Curriculum**

The curriculum was developed in collaboration with the Rwanda Zambia HIV Research Group (RZHRG), the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), and other national and international partners, in response to increased demand from field partners for interventions and training that would help them address the complex issues related to HIV counseling and testing with couples, who currently constitute the largest risk group in Africa for HIV transmission. It is available at online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/gap/CHCTintervention/>

> **STDPreventionOnline.org**

STDPreventionOnline.org is a social utility which allows members to share resources online. You can create a customized page for yourself or your organization to learn about new and effective disease prevention programs, connect with other researchers and practitioners who share your specific interests, share your own experiences and program methods, or locate employment opportunities. To access these features and more you must register for an account. You are welcome to join the community for free at www.stdpreventiononline.org

Upcoming Conference Opportunities

2008 National STD Prevention Conference: Confronting Challenges, Applying Solutions

The biennial STD Prevention Conference provides a rich opportunity to consider complex issues confronting STD prevention in the United States; and brings together a broad array of disciplines from academia, health departments, non-governmental organizations and private health care. The conference will be held in Chicago, Illinois March 10-13, 2008. Please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/stdconference/> for more details.

2008 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit

The goal of the meeting is to bring together leaders in HIV/viral hepatitis/STD/TB prevention to disseminate and exchange information and lessons learned and to network to enhance program planning and management. The conference will be held from June 11-14, 2008 in Detroit, Michigan. Please visit http://nmac.org/conferences_trainings/HPLS for details.

As always, should you have any further questions or suggestions we are eager to hear from you. Please contact Jo Valentine directly at (404) 639-8366 or via electronic mail at jvalentine@cdc.gov.

The CDC Syphilis Elimination Effort Coordinating Team

