



- Hold a syphilis elimination education workshop for your organization. Contact other community organizations to participate in the workshop.
- Organize a community health fair with a local hospital or community clinic. Offer free syphilis and other STD testing and distribute information about syphilis and other STDs.
- Contact your local health department to find out about current SEE activities in your community.
- Contact health reporters at local newspapers, radio and television stations and ask them to get involved by reporting on syphilis rates in your community and local efforts to eliminate it.
- Sponsor SEE public service advertisements in local newspapers and community newsletters.
- Distribute SEE posters and brochures to members of your organization and community.
- Educate policy makers and other community opinion leaders about the importance of syphilis elimination.

■ ■ ■ **SEE A BETTER FUTURE.**

By working together through the Syphilis Elimination Effort (SEE) to eliminate syphilis NOW, we can:

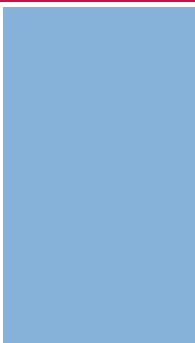
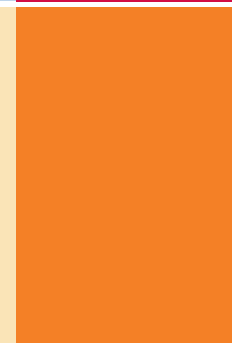
- Reduce a glaring racial disparity in our nation's overall health
- Decrease the spread of HIV
- Improve infant health
- Strengthen our public health system, which is more important than ever for our nation's health and well-being
- Reduce health care costs

For more information about SEE and how you can get involved, visit [www.cdc.gov/std/see/](http://www.cdc.gov/std/see/).



A community-based effort to eliminate syphilis in the United States.

**GETTING YOUR  
COMMUNITY INVOLVED**





### SEE WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

The Syphilis Elimination Effort (SEE) is a national initiative bringing together health care providers, members of community-based organizations, religious leaders, policy makers, and activists to drive down syphilis rates in the United States. SEE is part of the National Plan to Eliminate Syphilis developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its federal, state, and local partners.

The goals of the nationwide effort are to reduce the number of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis cases to less than 1,000 (0.4 cases per 100,000 people) and to make at least 90 percent of U.S. counties syphilis-free.

### THE TIME TO SEE IS NOW.

Syphilis is concentrated in a small number of counties in the United States – most of them urban or in the South. In 2003, 18 counties and one city accounted for half of the reported syphilis cases in the United States. While U.S. syphilis rates decreased during the 1990s and reached their lowest ever in 2000, they have begun rising again, increasing slightly in 2001 and more substantially in 2002. In 2003, reported P&S syphilis cases increased 4.6 percent.

Because syphilis tends to rebound in 7- to 10-year cycles, we must seize this opportunity to eliminate syphilis now, while rates are still relatively low. We have to act now to keep the rates from increasing further.

### WE ALL NEED TO SEE.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease that can affect anyone. Race or ethnicity is not a risk factor, but some communities are hit harder by syphilis than others. Syphilis continues to disproportionately affect African Americans and Hispanics. In 2003, the rate of P&S syphilis among African Americans was 5.2 times greater than the rate reported among non-Hispanic whites. The P&S syphilis rate among Hispanics (3 cases/100,000 people) was twice that reported among non-Hispanic whites (1.5 cases/100,000 people). It has been cited as one of the most glaring examples of existing gaps in minority health status. With increased awareness, appropriate diagnostic treatment, and changes in risk behaviors, this health disparity could be largely eliminated.

P&S syphilis rates among all U.S. men rose by 46 percent between 2000 and 2002, an increase that coincided with outbreaks among gay and bisexual men in several U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, and Miami Beach, among others, reflecting an increase in risky behavior in this population. The rate of P&S syphilis increased 13.5 percent among men between 2002 and 2003.

Eliminating syphilis will strengthen the state of public health in this country. We've made great progress against this terrible disease, but there's much more work to be done. The time to act is NOW. By detecting syphilis early and providing effective counseling messages and treatment, we can help make our community healthier now and in the future.

### SEE FOR YOURSELF.

- Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by a bacterium.
- Syphilis is passed from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore or lesion during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

- Syphilis can be passed from mother to baby, leading to health complications and even infant death.
- Syphilis progresses in stages and can lead to cardiovascular and neurological diseases and blindness over a period of time.
- Genital sores caused by syphilis make it easier to transmit and acquire HIV infection sexually—increasing the risk of getting and transmitting HIV infection by 2-5 times when syphilis is present.

#### But...

- Syphilis is preventable and treatable. Its spread can be stopped.
- The sooner syphilis is detected, the sooner its debilitating symptoms can be averted with treatment.
- Only a blood test and an exam by a health care provider can confirm whether someone has syphilis.

### GETTING YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVED.

There are many ways community leaders and organizations can get involved with syphilis elimination activities on the local level. Some of these activities include:

- Encourage community programs that promote syphilis prevention methods (or strategies) which include abstinence, monogamy, i.e., being faithful to a single sex partner, or using condoms consistently and correctly. These approaches can avoid risk (abstinence) or effectively reduce risk for contracting syphilis (monogamy, consistent and correct condom use).
- Form a SEE coalition with other community leaders (health care providers, faith-based leaders, policy makers, community-based organization leaders) to conduct syphilis awareness, testing, treatment, and prevention activities.

