

Expedited Partner Therapy to Manage STD Morbidity
HIV/STD Comprehensive Services Branch
Texas Department of State Health Services
Position Paper

The physical and economic burden of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in the United States is well documented. Chlamydia remains the most reported bacterial infection in the U.S. In 2004, Texas reported 70,232 positive chlamydia tests and 24,371 positive gonorrhea tests, plus public health officials suspect that much STD goes undetected. Clinicians need additional strategies to reduce STD morbidity in Texas. One such strategy being recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT).

EPT is the practice of treating the sex partners of persons with an STD without an intervening medical evaluation or professional prevention counseling of the partner. The usual implementation of EPT is through patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT), although other methods may be employed.

With patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT), clinicians provide their patients with drugs intended for the partners, prescribe extra doses of medication in the index patients' names, or write prescriptions in the partners' names. The available evidence indicates that Expedited Partner Therapy is at least equivalent in efficacy to standard partner management for gonorrhea and chlamydia infection; that traditional partner management by public health agencies and health care providers for these STDs is limited in scope; and that the benefits of EPT outweigh the risks. Therefore, EPT should be available to clinicians as an option for partner management for gonorrhea and chlamydia infection.

In Texas, as in the U.S, emerging data indicate that many providers selectively employ EPT for gonorrhea and chlamydia infection and that some do so routinely. Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) deliver medications in the field as part of STD public health follow-up. Clinicians should strongly consider EPT as an important and useful option for facilitating partner treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.