



December 19, 2006

Dear Colleague,

In May of 2005, I sent a Dear Colleague Letter describing CDC's support for expedited partner therapy (EPT) as a useful option to facilitate partner management (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/DearColleagueEPT5-10-05.pdf>), subsequently also endorsed in the 2006 *STD Treatment Guidelines*. In that same letter, we identified several operational barriers to implementation of EPT, including the uncertain legal status in some jurisdictions. We also urged health care providers to work with policy makers and other stakeholders to identify and address legal and administrative barriers to use of EPT. This letter is to call your attention to a tool that CDC has developed to help jurisdictions identify legal barriers and facilitators to implementation of EPT.

In the fall of 2005, CDC and the Center for Law and the Public's Health at Georgetown and Johns Hopkins Universities collaborated to assess the legal framework concerning EPT to assist state and local STD programs in their efforts to implement EPT as an additional partner management tool. We had two goals in undertaking this project: 1) to provide state and local public health partners with a tool to help them work with local legal counsel (in-house counsel, Attorneys General, City Attorneys) to understand and address potential legal barriers to implementation of EPT; and 2) to provide state and local public health partners with information about the EPT legal landscape in other jurisdictions to facilitate collaboration, and sharing of lessons learned. The results of our assessment are posted on our website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/ept/legal/default.htm> We hope we have developed a user-friendly tool that will allow our partners to easily access the state-level data we reviewed in our assessment, to understand our conclusions about the permissibility of EPT in each jurisdiction, and to identify other jurisdictions that might provide useful guidance or be collaborators in your efforts to address legal issues confronting EPT.

As you use this tool, please keep in mind that we are not offering legal advice on the status of EPT in any jurisdiction. Instead, we are providing you a tool we hope will help you and your local attorneys to address EPT.

We also seek your help with this tool. As you will see when you begin to use it, the legal landscape is complex and complicated. The inherently dynamic nature of the topic means that information may change, and that there may be links that no longer work properly. Thus, from the website we provide a mailbox for comments, and we invite you to provide feedback. We welcome your suggestions for making the tool more useful to you and your assistance in pointing out any inconsistencies or non-working links. We also welcome updates from you as you make progress in your state or local area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Douglas, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

John M. Douglas, Jr., MD
Director, Division of STD Prevention

National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention