

STATE OF NEVADA

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**Topic:** Significant Increase in Reported Early Syphilis Cases in Washoe County

**Section/Program:** Office of Public Health Informatics & Epidemiology/STD Prevention and Control

**Date:** January 10, 2014

**To:** Healthcare Providers

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**Significant Increase in Early Syphilis Cases During 2013**

In 2013, there were a total of 45 early syphilis (primary, secondary, and early latent stage) cases reported in Washoe County. This a *110% increase* compared to the total number of early syphilis cases reported in this region in 2012. Syphilis transmission in Washoe County is occurring primarily among men who have sex with men (MSM). Many of these individuals are co-infected with HIV. To address this increase, clinical providers should enhance STD prevention services to patients, particularly MSM, persons living with HIV infection, and pregnant women.

**Screening recommendations:**

- Perform syphilis serologic testing on anyone with signs or symptoms of syphilis. These commonly include genital/oral ulceration and rash on the palms of hands or soles of feet.
- Perform syphilis serologic screening on all men who have sex with men *at least yearly* and consider more frequent screening in individuals with high-risk behaviors.
- Perform syphilis serologic screening on anyone requesting an HIV test and anyone being tested for other sexually transmitted infections.
- In accordance with Nevada Senate Bill 304, all pregnant women must be screened for syphilis during the first and third trimesters.

**Treatment:**

- Provide treatment based on CDC's 2010 STD Treatment Guidelines  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/default.htm>
- Consider presumptive therapy in any patient presenting to your practice setting with classic features of primary or secondary syphilis.

**Partner Notification:**

- Encourage patients with primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis to notify their sex partners and encourage those partners to seek testing and treatment. Local health departments provide free STD testing and treatment for sex partners and can assist health care providers with partner notification.

**Reporting**

- Syphilis is a reportable disease in Nevada, positive cases should be reported to the State or Local Health Department (<http://www.health.nv.gov/Epidemiology/MorbidityForm-interactive.pdf>).


**Resources**


Downloadable or online brochures with clinical features of primary and secondary syphilis can be found at the California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center:

[http://www.stdhivtraining.org/clinical\\_resources.html](http://www.stdhivtraining.org/clinical_resources.html)

Nevada STD Statistics can be found at: [http://health.nv.gov/CD\\_HIV\\_STDProgram.htm](http://health.nv.gov/CD_HIV_STDProgram.htm)

*We commend providers for their valuable role in maintaining and promoting the health of Nevadans. Thank you for your continued commitment to this effort.*

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