



June 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Unfortunately, there is a surge in syphilis cases in Indian Country. After conferring with the IHS Infectious Disease Consultant, it's clear that we must take definitive action to address syphilis and all STIs at every site across the Agency. Therefore, please initiate the following at each service unit and community-based testing site in coordination with the respective community health teams and public health nursing.

1. **Annual syphilis testing** for persons aged 13-64 to eliminate syphilis transmission by early case recognition.
2. **Turn on the annual EHR reminder** at all sites to facilitate testing for two years or until incidence rates decrease locally to baseline.
3. **Three-point syphilis testing for all pregnant people:** at the first prenatal visit, the beginning of the third trimester, and delivery.
4. Adoption of an **STI/HIV/Viral hepatitis testing bundle** at all sites to screen broadly:
 - Syphilis screening test with reflex RPR and TPPA
 - HIV serology (with documentation of consent if required in the local state jurisdiction)
 - Screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia at three sites: Urine, Pharynx, Rectum
 - Screening for hepatitis B and C
 - Pregnancy test
5. Adoption of "**Express STI Testing.**" Express STI services refer to triage-based STI testing without needing a full clinical exam.
 - Research shows that express STI services increase clinic capacity and reduce the time to treatment.
 - Find the Express Testing Guide and Toolkit here. [Sample Toolkit for Express STI Resources - Indian Country ECHO](#)
6. **Enhance screening rates by screening outside of hospitals and clinics.**
 - Field testing at community centers, sporting events, health fairs, correctional settings, or on the street.
7. Provide **Field treatments for syphilis** for high-risk adults diagnosed with syphilis and their partners. PHNs could provide treatment with Benzathine Penicillin. The Express STI Services Toolkit includes policy examples. For questions, contact [Tina Tah](#) or [Melissa Wyaco](#).
8. **Presumptive treatment of syphilis** for anyone having signs or symptoms of syphilis or with known exposure to syphilis.
9. **Create and build awareness** and encourage people to get tested and treated. There is a new AI/AN-specific national campaign called [STOP SYPHILIS](#). The campaign offers handouts, posters, and other print materials, as well as social media posts and short educational videos.
 - All materials are free to order at www.stopsyphilis.org.
10. Reference the Syphilis Resources Hub: <https://www.indiancountryecho.org/syphilis-resources/>

Let's work together to address this serious issue!!

Dr. C

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