



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

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STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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November 20, 2018

Dear Provider,

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) would like to alert you to continued increases in syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia diagnoses reported throughout the Commonwealth in 2017. These infections can result in negative health outcomes such as congenital syphilis, neuro syphilis, infertility, miscarriage and increased HIV transmission. Addressing the rise of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) relies heavily on the work that you do to ensure patients receive CDC-recommended STD screening and treatment. The enclosed STD Action Kit includes the following resources for your practice:

- STD Screening Recommendations
- 2015 CDC STD Treatment Guidelines
- Taking a Sexual History Guide
- Syphilis Guide for Providers
- Epidemiologic Overview of Gonorrhea and Syphilis in Virginia Fact Sheets
- Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Fact Sheet
- Virginia Reportable Disease List

Electronic versions of these materials are also available at our provider resource webpage (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/disease-prevention/std/resources-forms/>).

Actions to prevent and control STDs:

1. **Take a regular, thorough sexual history** of all patients as part of routine medical care. Please see *Taking a Sexual History Guide*.
2. **Screen patients appropriately** for syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV. Please see *STD Screening and Recommendations*.
 - a. **Screen all pregnant women for syphilis** during the first trimester (within 15 days after first prenatal appointment) and;
 - b. At the beginning of the third trimester (around 28 weeks) for patients who have had multiple sexual partners within the previous year, those with any prior history of a sexually transmitted disease and those living in communities and populations in which the prevalence of syphilis is high (Virginia Administrative

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Code 12VAC5-90-130). Pregnant women with an indication for third trimester syphilis screening should also receive a follow up HIV test in the third trimester.

3. **Treat patients according to the latest CDC STD treatment guidelines.** Please see *2015 STD Treatment Guidelines*.
4. **Report suspected gonorrhea treatment failures** to your local health department. **Obtain cultures to test for decreased antibiotic susceptibility** from any patients with suspected gonorrhea treatment failure.
5. **Report STDs as required by state law.** Confidential morbidity reports (Epi-1 forms) may now be submitted electronically online. See the *Virginia Reportable Disease List* for a list of reportable diseases and <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/commonwealth-of-virginiastate-board-of-health/> for information on submitting an Epi-1 online.

Clinical consultations on STD management are available from experts at the National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers through <https://www.stdccn.org/>. You may also contact me at 804-864-7961 or at Diana.Prat@vdh.virginia.gov with any questions or concerns.

We look forward to your continued partnership in the prevention and control of STDs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Thank you for your dedicated efforts to improve and maintain the health of the people in Virginia!

Sincerely,



Diana L. Prat

Director of STD Surveillance, Operations, and Data Administration