

Technical Note: Update to Syphilis Screening Recommendations in Virginia Based on 2024 Epidemiological Data

Overview:

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has updated its [syphilis screening recommendations](#) for reproductive-aged sexually active people (15-44 years) based on the most recent Virginia epidemiological data. The revised Virginia guidelines now reference using the rate of **syphilis of all stages** among women aged 15-44, rather than limiting analysis to **primary and secondary** syphilis cases.

Rationale for Change:

The Virginia syphilis screening guidelines aim to reduce syphilis and congenital syphilis rates. Congenital syphilis can result from maternal infection at any stage of syphilis during pregnancy, not just primary or secondary stages. In Virginia, women tend to be diagnosed later during the course of their syphilis infection. In 2024, only 21% of all syphilis diagnoses among women 15-44 were primary and secondary stages; 79% were diagnosed as later syphilis stages. Expanding the guidelines to include the rate of all stages of syphilis ensures a more accurate representation of counties with high syphilis rates among women, including counties with congenital syphilis diagnoses that would otherwise have been left out.