

## **Syphilis Outbreak Information As of September 5, 2008**



The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health is actively collaborating with the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department to increase community awareness of the significant increase in syphilis infections recently reported in Ohio County. Since January 2008, Ohio County has reported seven cases of early syphilis, compared to zero cases for 2007. All seven cases have been localized to the Wheeling area.

Disease Intervention Specialists from the Bureau for Public Health are investigating all cases to identify sexual partners, and those located have been referred for testing and treatment. Unfortunately, partner identification is incomplete due to the inability to locate reported partners, anonymous partners, and other factors. The Bureau for Public Health is supporting the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department's efforts to encourage individuals who suspect possible infection to contact the county health department for free confidential testing and treatment.

Statewide, the number of reported cases of early syphilis in West Virginia has increased 67% since 2003. Therefore, the Bureau for Public Health is encouraging all county health departments, especially those located in counties that border Ohio County or are located in the northern part of West Virginia, to screen and test for syphilis all individuals at risk for sexually transmitted diseases. The Office of Laboratory Services has been informed of this situation and will provide supplies to accommodate county health department needs.

The HIV/AIDS/STD Program will make available to the county health departments, especially those located in counties that border Ohio County or are located in the northern part of West Virginia, and any CDC recommended drugs required to treat syphilis infections. The Program encourages these county health departments to maintain adequate stock of drugs for preventative or therapeutic treatment of syphilis infections.

In an effort to successfully prevent and control the transmission of syphilis within the state, the Bureau for Public Health requests that county health departments inform private providers of the situation and the need for reporting of disease and treatment. The HIV/AIDS/STD Program will be available for questions and concerns regarding prevention, testing, treatment, and follow-up evaluation for syphilis infections at 1-800-642-8244 or locally at 558-2950.

Thank you.

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources · Bureau For Public Health  
·Division of Surveillance and Disease Control  
350 Capitol Street Room 125  
Charleston, WV 25301  
In WV: 1-800-642-8244  
Phone: 304-558-2195