

# HEALTH ADVISORY

May 16, 2017



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



**TO:** Physicians and other Health Care Providers

**Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.**

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the office of:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**

Health Officer

Clark County Public Health

Phone: (360) 397-8412

## Alert categories:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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May 16, 2017

Dear Perinatal Provider:

During 2016 Washington State experienced a thirty percent increase in infectious syphilis. The epidemiology of syphilis is changing from primarily affecting men who have sex with men to affecting more heterosexuals. As a result, during 2016, five women delivered babies with congenital syphilis – the highest number of babies detected with congenital syphilis since 1992.

**We need your help to eliminate congenital syphilis. Please take the following actions:**

- Test all pregnant women for syphilis at the first prenatal visit or when pregnancy is confirmed.
- For pregnant women at high risk of syphilis (e.g., has multiple current sex partners or a new sex partner, has sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, has sex in exchange for money or drugs, has been diagnosed with another STD while pregnant), repeat testing at the beginning of the third trimester (approximately 28 weeks gestation) and at delivery.
- Make sure all mothers have been tested for syphilis at least once during pregnancy or at delivery before discharging them from the hospital.
- Treat women infected with syphilis immediately according to CDC's STD Treatment Guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/syphilis.htm>).
- Report cases of syphilis immediately to us, your local health department (<https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/resources-healthcare-providers>).
- Call us - **360-397-8082** - we are happy to help with:
  - Consultation and partner services
  - Treatment assistance for uninsured patients

Thank you for the work you do every day to keep moms and babies in our state healthy.

Sincerely,

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH  
Director/Health Officer, Clark County Public Health