



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

June 2, 2008

Dear Colleague:

The Syphilis Elimination Project of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) would like to alert you to the **continuing increase of syphilis in Minnesota among men who have sex with men (MSM)**, and offer some resources to help.

For 2007 the number of early syphilis cases (primary, secondary, and early latent) increased overall from 104 cases to 114, a 10% increase. However, among MSM the number increased nearly 30%, and now makes up 90% of all new infections. (Go to www.health.state.mn.us/sep for a link to the 2007 statistics.)

As part of our response to the continued increase in syphilis rates among MSM, we have created the **Healthcare and Men Who Have Sex With Men: Challenges and Opportunities Program**. The program offers resources, trainings, and materials to help clinics examine and increase their cultural sensitivity for MSM patients. Information about this program and an assortment of MSM health informational materials and lobby posters are available at the Syphilis Elimination Web site at www.health.state.mn.us/sep.

One facet of this program is **in-clinic brownbag presentations**. The objective of these presentations is to:

- Better understand MSM cultural sensitivity issues and strategies for patient care.
- Examine MSM health disparities and their implications to improved health outcomes.
- Highlight barriers to improved clinical care for MSM.

We would like to offer this presentation to your clinic. If you would like to host an MSM health brownbag presentation, or would like to hear more about syphilis in general, please contact me for more details.

Thank you for all your hard work to stop the spread of syphilis!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "WB", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

William Burleson
Syphilis Elimination Coordinator
STD and HIV Section,
Infectious Disease, Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division
Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-4004
william.burleson@health.state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us/sep

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