

Local Innovations in Congenital Syphilis Prevention



In partnership with CDC's Division of STD Prevention (DSTD), the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) is supporting a diverse set of local jurisdictions/health departments across the U.S. to implement and evaluate a program strategy to improve congenital syphilis prevention and control efforts in their areas. The objective is to help galvanize local efforts to address rising rates of congenital syphilis and syphilis among pregnant individuals and individuals of child-bearing capacity. Specifically, innovations or improvements focus on one or more of the following areas of congenital syphilis prevention:

- Improving support for pregnant individuals who have syphilis
- Improving support for pregnant individuals who do not have syphilis
- Improving support for individuals with syphilis who could become pregnant but are not currently pregnant

Innovations and improvements incorporate components such as, pregnancy testing, pregnancy intention ascertainment, STI testing and treatment, partner services, case management, and referral to care. Funded jurisdictions will implement and evaluate the innovation or improvement over approximately 12 months.

The project is guided by the following questions:

1. How feasible was the innovation or improvement to implement?
2. What barriers and facilitators affected successful implementation?
3. To what extent did the innovation or improvement reach its intended targets and outcomes?

Congenital syphilis is...



Increasing in the U.S.



A source of major health problems, even death



Preventable

The six funded jurisdictions selected through a competitive process to collaborate on this project are as follows:

New York City, NY: The Bureau of STI (BSTI) is piloting a [Congenital Syphilis Prevention Investigator](#) (CPI) Model. BSTI will shift the assignment of disease intervention specialist (DIS) investigations by designating one CPI per region (8 total) to be assigned all syphilis investigations among persons who are or may become pregnant in their respective region. Estimates are that each CPI will conduct an average of 16 investigations per month among persons who are or may become pregnant — accounting for approximately 46% of their total workload — and that this focus on that population will improve proficiency, knowledge, and skill in conducting such investigations.

Maricopa County, AZ: The Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) is collaborating with a community partner, CAN Community Health, to utilize their [mobile healthcare clinics](#) to provide STI diagnosis and treatment to those individuals at highest risk of a pregnancy with congenital syphilis—including those experiencing homelessness, engaging in drug use, or recently incarcerated. MCDPH will provide

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April 2020



supplies and support to integrate point-of-care syphilis testing and treatment into CAN's existing mobile clinic services which provide health screenings and point-of-care HIV testing to the target populations.

County of Tulare, CA: Tulare County Health and Human Services Administration Public Health is implementing **telehealth by DIS** to provide case management, referrals, and linkage to care support for pregnant and non-pregnant syphilis cases. They are utilizing this approach to minimize transportation and mobility issues that impede access to care. The Communicable Disease unit will provide communication and counseling through telehealth to expand services to monitor patients for syphilis and confirm their treatment. They also hope to use a telehealth referral process for syphilis patients to use with their partners.

Miami-Dade County, FL: The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) is expanding its successful addition of routine syphilis screening to existing routine, "opt-out" HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening **initiatives in emergency departments**. Following successful implementation of their **smart screening algorithm for syphilis** within the existing HIV/HCV screening infrastructure at one local hospital, FDOH is expanding this to a second facility which had 50% of the congenital syphilis cases reported in 2018. The FDOH will also partner with the TOPWA (Targeted

Outreach for Pregnant Women Act) program to conduct outreach into communities with a high risk of congenital syphilis and less likelihood of receiving prenatal care.

Gwinnett, Newtown, and Rockdale Counties, GA: The county health departments are implementing a **new model of care program, the Pregnancy Panel**. Under this program, all women presenting at a clinic requesting a pregnancy test are also tested for STIs, including HIV and syphilis. Regardless of STI status, pregnant patients receive case management from a member of the Infectious Disease team to ensure education about preventing STIs and necessary future testing to protect themselves and their baby. Linkage/referral to prenatal care is also provided, as well as connection to Health Department programs such as WIC, Immunizations, and Family Planning. Follow-up is conducted to ensure future recommended testing and treatment is completed. The case manager also serves as the patient's single point of contact with the Health Department.

San Antonio, TX: The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) is enhancing efforts initiated through the development of the Fetal-Infant Mortality Review and Healthy Beats program. SAMHD will assess **pregnancy intention**, increase **syphilis testing** and ensure adequate treatment, and expand **case management referrals and linkage to prenatal care services** for 120 pregnant women. SAMHD will also expand efforts to ensure adequate syphilis treatment among women of childbearing age to prevent future congenital syphilis diagnosis by **using incentives** to encourage treatment completion. SAMHD will also strengthen relationships with Bexar County providers to increase syphilis testing and ensure adequate treatment with the goal of conducting 24 provider education sessions.

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National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

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