

## HEALTH ALERT NETWORK HEALTH DISTRICT 4

### SYPHILIS ALERT FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Central District Health Department (CDHD) Urges Medical Providers to Consider Syphilis, Especially in Men Who Have Sex with Men

September 13, 2011

Central District Health Department (CDHD) has observed an increase in syphilis cases over the last three months. The latest cases are occurring mainly in men who have sex with men (MSM) but cases have also occurred in bisexual and heterosexual patients.

Please consider syphilis if a patient presents with:

- Any ano/genital or oral lesion, especially indurated and minimally painful ulcers
- Any unexplained rash, especially with palmar or plantar involvement
- Unexplained lymphadenopathy

Groups at high risk for syphilis include:

- Men who have sex with men
- Sexually active HIV-infected persons
- Individuals with multiple sex partners
- Patients who are evaluated for any sexually transmitted disease
- Sex partners of confirmed syphilis cases

#### **Screening & Testing**

For any patients with the above clinical findings *or* in a high risk group, Central District Health recommends ordering both screening (e.g., RPR or VDRL) and confirmatory syphilis serologies (e.g. FTA-Abs, MHA-TP, or TPHA).

#### **Treatment and Prevention in the Community**

To stop the spread of disease:

- Seize every treatment opportunity. Consider presumptive treatment if a patient is symptomatic, is a contact to a syphilis case, belongs to a high-risk group, or if follow-up is uncertain.
- Use single dose benzathine penicillin G (e.g., Bicillin-LA), 2.4 million units IM as first-line therapy.
- Call CDHD at 327-8625 to report syphilis.

For more information, call the Office of Communicable Disease Control at 327-8625.

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