

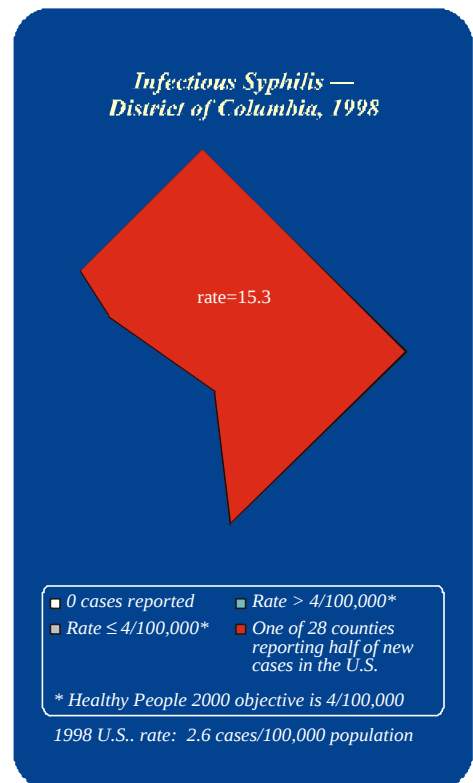
Eliminating Syphilis Washington, DC

Why is Syphilis Elimination in the U.S. within our reach now?

- Syphilis is a preventable and curable sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Infectious syphilis is at the lowest rate ever reported: 2.6 cases/100,000 population (6,993 total cases).
- Syphilis is now very concentrated; half of all new cases in 1998 were reported from only 28 counties, which represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Washington DC?

- **In 1998 Washington DC ranked 16th in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (81 cases) and had a rate 6 times higher than the national rate.
- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**
 - S** 84% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).
 - S** The infectious syphilis rate in Washington DC for African Americans is 33 times greater than the rate for white Americans.
- **To decrease spread of HIV infection**
 - S** Syphilis increases HIV transmission at least 2-to-5 fold.
- **To improve infant health**
 - S** Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy causing stillbirths or congenital infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.
 - S** In 1998, 8 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Washington, D.C. for a rate of 95.4 cases/100,000 births, nearly 5 times higher than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.



Washington DC Responds

- The D.C. Syphilis Elimination Community Coalition is composed of representatives from the health care sector, faith community, corrections, community-based organizations, and government agencies. The coalition will work to raise community awareness of syphilis and will guide the Bureau of STD Control's syphilis elimination activities.
- A comprehensive community needs assessment is planned for fall 1999. This needs assessment will be a collaboration between CDC and the D.C. Bureau of STD Control that will be used as another tool to guide syphilis elimination efforts.

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention

