



April 1<sup>st</sup> 2005

Dear colleague

The Syphilis Elimination Effort (SEE) is a national initiative which brings health care providers, policy makers, and community leaders together, with state and local public health agencies, to reduce syphilis rates in the United States. Through partnership working, we have a unique opportunity to control this devastating disease which, if untreated, facilitates the transmission of HIV and may result in congenital disease and prenatal death.

Since its launch in 1999, the SEE has made a number of gains. Primary and secondary (P & S) syphilis rates reached their lowest point ever in 2000 with the numbers of P&S syphilis cases among women and among African Americans decreasing every year since 1990. Indeed, during 2002-2003, P&S syphilis cases declined 23.6% among women and 17.8% among African Americans. Improvements have also been made in training, community mobilization and education across the country. Despite these gains, the overall number of cases of P&S syphilis increased between 2000-2003, largely due to increases among men, associated with outbreaks among men who have sex with men (MSM). Today, syphilis remains a highly concentrated infection especially in the South and, increasingly, in urban areas of the country that have large populations of MSM.

We are pleased to present this redeveloped SEE website which has been designed to facilitate ready access to relevant data and resources. In addition, to assist you in mobilizing local affected communities in the fight against syphilis, we have recently developed a [SEE Community Mobilization Toolkit](#). Target-specific materials in the toolkit can be used to increase local awareness and visibility of the syphilis elimination program. These materials can also be used to support efforts to change or modify knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions about syphilis and the syphilis elimination effort. They can be used in educational events with political leaders, health care providers and community leaders; and help to encourage greater community involvement and support for the program.

The need for sustained mobilization in the fight against syphilis is as relevant today as it was 5 years ago. Although substantial gains have been made it is important that our actions remain multi-faceted and coordinated. Please join the Syphilis Elimination Effort and use the resources on this website to help build healthier communities across the United States.

In Health,

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