



MARCH 4,

Connections Newsletter (Issue 24-1)

February - March 2024

AT A GLANCE

High syphilis rates, hepatitis vaccinations, a cooperative agreement, and an MMWR on tuberculosis.



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From the director



Jonathan Mermin, MD, MPH (RADM, USPHS)

Syphilis and congenital syphilis rates have reached historic highs, with over 200,000 cases of syphilis in adults and adolescents and 3,755 cases of congenital syphilis in 2022. These numbers highlight the [health system failures](#) and [missed opportunities for preventing congenital syphilis](#) reported in CDC's Vital Signs late last year.

Syphilis can cause serious medical complications, including neurological, ocular, and cardiovascular problems. Congenital syphilis infection can

cause stillbirth and long-term physical and cognitive impairment. Yet, syphilis is preventable, and thousands of infections have been averted through health communications, DIS follow-up, and providing testing and treatment, including for pregnant persons. But, for many, the healthcare system can pose challenges, both individual- and at the system-level. By improving access to syphilis testing and treatment for everyone, we can prevent syphilis in adults and babies. Our boots on the ground public health workforce, clinicians, and community partners : critical to helping us meet people where they are with easy to follow, realistic information and services to prevent what otherwise could be a missed prevention opportunity. CDC has a new resource, [Syphilis Prenatal Screening_\(Protect Your Baby\)](#), that is digitally accessible and provides materials that can be handed out or left behind in an office or the field.

The congenital syphilis epidemic is an untenable crisis. In response, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is taking action through the establishment of the [National Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis Syndemic \(NSCSS\) Federal Task Force](#) [↗](#). We can also work within doctors' offices and STI clinics, and beyond them to bridge prevention gaps. Every encounter a healthcare provider has with a patient during pregnancy is an opportunity to prevent congenital syphilis.

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Publication highlights

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable disease that typically causes a mild, self-limited illness, though it can result in serious complications, including death. From 2016 to 2022, hepatitis A outbreaks were widespread across the United States with 315 outbreak-related deaths. In 2023, 34 states declared an end to these outbreaks. Increased hepatitis A vaccination coverage, especially among adults with increased risk of infection, are critical for preventing future hepatitis A outbreaks and resulting deaths. For more information read more in MMWR: [Preventable Deaths During Widespread Community Hepatitis A Outbreaks — United States, 2016–2022 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Hepatitis A is preventable!


Clinicians: Vaccinating people can help prevent outbreaks and save lives.

Offer vaccination to:

- People who use drugs**
- People experiencing homelessness**
- People with chronic liver disease**


[bit.ly/link](#)
MONTH X, 2023

Hepatitis A is preventable

Summary Sources: Hofmeister MG, Gupta N. Preventable Deaths During Widespread Community Hepatitis A Outbreaks — United States, 2016–2022. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2023;72:1128–1133. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7242a1> .

New product offerings

CDC Announces New National Partnership Cooperative Agreement


On February 2, 2024, CDC posted a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for CDC-RFA-PW-24-0080, [Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health](#) . The cooperative agreement replaces CDC's [Nation: Partners Umbrella Cooperative Agreement \(OT18-1802\)](#), which will end on July 31, 2024. We are encouraging partners to apply for these funds and share the NOFO with others who are interested in applying. **Applications for this NOFO are due April 2, 2024.** For more information, see the February 6th [NCHHSTP Dear Colleague Letter](#).

News media updates



Think Test Treat TB

CDC analysis of U.S. health care providers' TB practices

A recent CDC publication in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, "[Tuberculosis Testing and Latent Tuberculosis Infection Treatment Practices Among Health Care Providers — United States, 2020–2022](#)" shares an analysis of how health care providers are implementing the [latest latent TB infection recommendations](#) . Learn how health care providers and patients can work together to [think, test, and treat TB](#).

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