



Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

Lindsay M. Weaver, MD, FACEP
State Health Commissioner

Dear, Colleague:

I am writing to seek your partnership in addressing the alarming rise of congenital syphilis cases both in Indiana and nationally.

Here in Indiana, the number of congenital syphilis cases has increased by 2,300% from 2018 to 2023. Nationally, there has been a 755% increase in congenital syphilis cases between 2012 and 2021. CDC's recent analysis shows that almost nine in 10 cases of newborn syphilis in 2022 might have been prevented with timely testing and treatment during pregnancy, more than half of cases were among mothers who tested positive for syphilis during pregnancy but did not receive adequate or timely treatment, and nearly 40 percent of cases were among birthing mothers who were not receiving prenatal care.

While prenatal care settings have traditionally been a major setting for diagnosing and treating syphilis among pregnant women, all healthcare providers play a critical role in screening reproductive age individuals. IDOH has created a new digital [Congenital and Adult Syphilis Toolkit](#) with resources for clinicians and public health professionals. The toolkit provides more in-depth information, but the following are some of our primary recommendations:

- Perform syphilis testing on all patients upon finding a positive pregnancy test.
- Test all pregnant patients three times during pregnancy (at initial prenatal visit, again at 28-32 weeks of gestation, and then at delivery).
- Meet people where they are with syphilis testing and treatment outside of settings in which pregnant patients are typically encountered. This could include emergency departments, urgent cares, primary care visits, jail/prison intake, local health departments, community programs, and other addiction services.
- Perform screening and treatment of all sexually active women and their partners for syphilis in [counties with high syphilis rates](#).

Point your
cellphone camera
at this QR code to
access our
Congenital and
Adult Syphilis
Toolkit.



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- Perform screening and appropriate treatment for those with other risk factors for syphilis (have unprotected sex and do not use condoms or do not use them correctly, have multiple sex partners, have a sex partner who has syphilis and have sex with a partner who has multiple sex partners).
- Treat all pregnant women who are infected with syphilis immediately upon diagnosis, according to their clinical stage of infection. Treatment must be with penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin LA).

The continued increase in syphilis and congenital syphilis in Indiana can only be addressed with increased testing and treatment. It will take all of us across the state to stop this increase and to eliminate congenital syphilis from our communities. We are asking for your assistance to help make this goal a reality and to save our infants from this life-threatening infection.

If you are having trouble acquiring Bicillin, please email Chief Medical Officer Guy Crowder at Gcrowder@health.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Lindsay M. Weaver, MD, FACEP
State Health Commissioner