

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
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<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us>

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Dear Colleague,

Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are among the most commonly reported conditions in Colorado. Approximately 17,000 cases of chlamydia and 3,300 cases of gonorrhea were reported to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment in 2007 with the highest rates of these STI occurring among 15- to 24-year olds. These infections can result in pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy, pelvic inflammatory disease, and infertility and account for tremendous private and public health care costs.

Because persons infected with chlamydia and gonorrhea often have no symptoms, screening and treatment of persons at increased risk of infection is an important strategy to prevent and control these sexually transmitted infections (STI). A second strategy involves ensuring that partners of infected patients receive timely and appropriate medical follow-up. For many years, assuring partner treatment required that a health care provider examine exposed partners prior to their being treated. While this remains the preferred partner treatment option, recent research suggests that expedited partner therapy (EPT) in which exposed partners are treated without an intervening clinical assessment and without prevention counseling is a viable alternative for assuring partner treatment. In many instances, EPT involves providing a patient with medications that the patient then delivers to his or her partners (i.e., partner-delivered patient therapy or PDPT).

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is encouraging Colorado health care providers to consider using EPT to assure that the partners of patients diagnosed with an STI are adequately treated. Both the Colorado State Board of Medical Examiners and Colorado State Board of Pharmacy have enacted policies supporting this practice.^{1 2} Additionally, the CDC has endorsed the use of EPT in the 2006 *STD Treatment Guidelines* and *Expedited Partner Therapy in the Management of Sexually Transmitted Diseases* guidance under certain circumstances.^{3 4 5}

To assist you in making decisions about whether and how best to implement EPT in your practice setting, the department has created a website containing a variety of resources. The website address is <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/HIVandSTD/index.html>, then go to Expedited Partner Therapy. You may also call Kelly Voorhees at (303) 692-2658 if you have other questions about EPT.

Thank you for considering how you might help to further decrease the number of persons in Colorado affected by STI.

Sincerely,



Ned Calonge, MD
Chief Medical Officer

¹ Colorado State Board of Medical Examiners Policy Number 40-10: Appropriateness of Treating Partners of Patients with Sexually Transmitted Diseases. May 10, 2001.

² Colorado State Board of Pharmacy Policy Number 40-4: Appropriateness of Labeling Prescriptions to Partners of Patients with Sexually Transmitted Infections. July 19, 2007.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMWR 2006; 55 (No. RR-11): 5-6.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Expedited partner therapy in the management of sexually transmitted diseases*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2006.

⁵ EPT can be used as a treatment option for treating the partners of heterosexual men and women diagnosed with chlamydia and gonorrhea. Written materials accompanying medications should instruct partners to see a medical provider if they are experiencing symptoms. EPT should not be used as a partner management strategy for the partners of men who have sex with men, women with trichomoniasis, or persons diagnosed with infectious syphilis.