

Progress

We've made great progress against this terrible disease, but there's much more work to be done. The time to act is NOW. By detecting and treating syphilis early, we can make our communities healthier now and in the future. Educating congregants about preventing and treating diseases like syphilis is an important community health issue.

You Know Your Congregation Best

Syphilis is preventable and treatable, and its spread can be stopped. Syphilis prevention methods and strategies can include abstinence, monogamy (i.e. being faithful to a single sex partner), or using condoms consistently and correctly. These approaches can avoid risk (abstinence) or effectively reduce risk for syphilis (monogamy and condom use).

[NOTE: These messages may not be appropriate for people of all faiths or religious backgrounds. Only you, as a religious leader, can decide which messages can be effectively and appropriately delivered and which might be offensive or inappropriate for your congregation.]

Syphilis elimination will only work if you and other like you are involved.



A Better Future

By working together to eliminate syphilis NOW, we can:

- Reduce a glaring racial disparity in our community's overall health.
- Decrease the spread of HIV.
- Improve infant health by reducing the risk of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis.
- Strengthen our public health system, which is more important than ever for our community's health and well-being.
- Reduce health care costs.



Contact us at
513-946-7591

Social Media:     
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PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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Hamilton County Public Health

Involving your Congregation in Syphilis Elimination

LET'S WORK TOGETHER



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You Are Important

The faith community has had to take on many issues to help raise awareness and educate congregations about serious issues that disproportionately affect different populations.



Because of the tremendous respect and credibility the faith community generates, it has the ability to mobilize the masses and disseminate appropriate information. As the community's center for hope, religious life and information, faith organizations can bring public health issues to light and move members to seek help if it is needed. There are many health issues facing congregants today: diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and STDs. Each of these is a battle to be waged, and some can be won. Syphilis elimination is one battle we can win today.

Here's The Issue

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is concentrated in a small number of counties in the United States. In 2012, Hamilton County was 30th in the U.S. in number of reported primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis cases. It is important to know that members of your congregation may be at risk.

Syphilis can affect anyone. Syphilis disproportionately affects African American communities. It has been cited as one of the most glaring examples of existing gaps in minority health status.

We have an opportunity to decrease a racial disparity in Hamilton County's health profile. For example, the 2012 rate of P&S syphilis infection among black Hamilton County residents was 48.5 per 100,000, compared to 3.8 per 100,000 among white Hamilton County residents. Compare that to a national average of 16.4 cases per 100,000 African Americans and it is evident that we have an issue in Hamilton County.

Syphilis Rates

U.S. 5.0 cases per 100,000 population

Ohio 9.9 cases per 100,000 population

Your Community 24.2 per 100,000 population

Syphilis can be passed from mother to baby during pregnancy (congenital syphilis), leading to health complications, congenital deformities, stillbirth and infant death. In 2012, the rate of congenital syphilis in Hamilton County (52.8 per 100,000 live births) was seven times higher than the 2012 national rate (7.8 per 100,000 live births).

Syphilis increases the chance of HIV transmission by up to five times. By eliminating syphilis, communities can improve infant health, slow the spread of HIV infection and reduce disparities in health.

The majority of Hamilton County P&S syphilis cases in 2012 – 40.8 percent – occurred among those age 15-24 years.



Male residents of Hamilton County had a 2012 P&S syphilis rate of 19.0 per 100,000; more than double the 2012 national male P&S syphilis rate. Within Hamilton County, 41.1 percent of all male cases of P&S syphilis during 2012 occurred among individuals identified as men who have sex with men.

Women are also experiencing high rates of syphilis. In 2012, female Hamilton County residents had a P&S syphilis rate of 13.7 per 100,000.



What You Can Do

Your faith organization can play a crucial role in eliminating syphilis.

Here's how:

- Identify a church liaison to represent your congregation on the Faith Community Alliance (FCA).
- Work with the FCA to develop a plan for the entire community.
- Develop and adopt a plan for your congregation.



Who to involve:

- Church Leadership
- Health Ministries
- Youth Leadership
- Liaison with Your Local Health Department

In the face of a disease that is 100 percent preventable and treatable, faith organizations can provide important prevention education and help to those who may be affected. While we may have wished for years that it would just go away, we now have a chance to make it so.

If you have any questions, please call Hamilton County Public Health at 513-946-7951.