

September 26, 2018

RE: Outbreak of Syphilis among Women and Infants in Arizona

Dear Healthcare Providers and Partners,

On September 25, 2018 the Arizona Department of Health Services released a Health Alert Network Notification announcing that there is a statewide outbreak of syphilis in women and babies in Arizona.

In response to this outbreak designation and in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹ and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists², **the Pima County Health Department recommends:**

- All pregnant women be screened for syphilis at the first prenatal visit or other encounter with the health care setting (e.g. urgent care, emergency department, primary care).
- Screening must be repeated once early in the third trimester (i.e., 28-32 weeks estimated gestational age) and again when presenting for delivery.
- All pregnant women with a positive screen and a diagnosis of syphilis require prompt antibiotic treatment per established guidelines.

From 2016 to 2017, cases of congenital syphilis in Arizona nearly doubled, and are on track to double again this year (2016 – 16, 2017 – 30, YTD 2018 –36). A similar trend is occurring in Pima County, as recent as 2015, there were no reported cases of congenital syphilis; however, in 2016 there was 1 case, in 2017 there were 3 cases, and thus far in 2018 there have been 3 cases.

These local trends reflect a nationwide increase of cases among women and newborns. From 2016 to 2017 alone, the CDC reports that rates of syphilis increased by 21 percent among women and by 44 percent among newborns.

Please reach out to the Health Department at (520) 724-3947 if you have any questions about the implementation of these recommendations. Our staff can also answer questions about other sexually transmitted infections, provide confidential testing and treatment to partners of positive cases and community outreach and education services.

Sincerely,



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Pima County

¹ MMWR Recomm Rep. 2015; 64(RR-03):43

² Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2017; 216:352