



BRIEF FROM THE CHIEF

Michael G. Harmon, MA, Chief, HIV/STD Service

Syphilis Outbreak in Washington County

Three individuals infected with syphilis were identified through the Washington County Health Department in Bartlesville within one week in August 2006. In the last five years only one case of syphilis was reported in Washington County; therefore, three cases within one week was cause for alarm.

Oklahoma State Department of Health Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) were assigned to Bartlesville on a rotating basis to investigate anyone who might have been exposed to this disease. The county health department staff distributed fliers to targeted areas encouraging people to be tested. During the investigation, over 70 people were interviewed and 21 individuals tested positive for syphilis. As of October, 2006, there were no new cases reported in Washington County.

It appears crystal meth may be playing a significant role in the transmission of STDs in rural communities, including the recent outbreak in Washington County. The increase in syphilis cases among heterosexuals contradicts what is happening nationally and might signify an important shift in the populations at risk for syphilis in Oklahoma.

Nationally, increases in syphilis seem to be occurring among males who have sex with males, many of whom may be co-infected with HIV.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease affecting approximately 32,000 Americans annually. It traditionally affects heterosexual men and women, especially from minority groups, but in the past five years that population has changed to men who have sex with men (MSM). The disease spreads from person to person through direct contact with an ulcer-like lesion called a chancre that typically occurs on the external genitals, vagina, anus, or rectum but can also occur on the lips and in the mouth. Syphilis infection is also an additional risk factor for exposure to HIV.

This syphilis outbreak response demonstrates how a public health team approach can have significant impact on reduction of disease transmission. Dedicated HIV/STD Service staff continue to work diligently to improve the health of our citizens.

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COMMUNITY PLANNING

OCPG AND OHTCC JOIN FORCES



A collaboration committee has been working to combine the Oklahoma HIV Prevention Community Planning Group (OCPG) and the Oklahoma HIV Treatment and Care Consortia (OHTCC). In October the Collaboration Committee that has been working to join these two groups together met and worked on group policy and procedures as well as choosing the new name for the combined planning body. The new group which will hold the first meeting in January, 2007 will be called the Oklahoma HIV Planning Council (OHPC).

The OHPC will consist of twenty-five voting members with a minimum of five persons being persons living with HIV. The remaining twenty members shall be five representatives of HIV Prevention, five representatives of HIV Treatment and Care, and ten at-large members. The HIV/STD Service Chief may appoint other non-voting OHPC advisory members. Members may include representatives from other state government/community agencies, subject matter experts, or HIV/STD Service employees. Considerations for membership include: race/ethnicity, gender, age, geographic area of residence and/or employment, HIV status, HIV risk status, occupation/area of expertise. The composition of the OHPC will be representative of the current and projected HIV epidemic in Oklahoma. OHPC members serve a one-year term. Applications for the council were distributed in November with a special committee assigned to select members for the first term of the OHPC.

New applications and those wishing to re-apply for membership will submit applications yearly in November.

For information about the Oklahoma HIV Planning Council, please contact Sally Bouse-Pittser. 405-271-4636 or SallyB@health.ok.gov

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 7, 2007 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day <http://www.blackaidsgiving.org/>

March 4 -10, 2007 The Black Church Week of Prayer <http://www.balmingilead.org/programs/weekofprayer2007>

March 21, 2007 National Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day <http://www.nnaapc.org>

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WHERE TO GET HELP FOR
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

918 area code:

Oklahoma State University, Center for Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine - (OSU-COM) Health Care Center, Tulsa (918) 382-5058

405 and 580 area codes:

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center College of Medicine, Infectious Disease Institute, Oklahoma City (405) 271-6431

DHS (the Department of Human Services) has AIDS Care Coordinators who help people with HIV/AIDS:

Tulsa and the eastern part of the state:

(800) 734-7516 or TTY (918) 581-2146

Oklahoma City, north central, and northwest Oklahoma:

(800) 884-1572 or TTY (405) 271-5816

Case management, applications for medications, and other services are available through Ryan White Title II and other resources.

918 area code:

Tulsa C.A.R.E.S. - (918) 834-4194 or 1-800-474-4872

405 and 580 area codes:

RAIN, Inc., Oklahoma City (405) 232-2437 or 1-800-285 CARE (2273)

RAIN, Inc., LAWTON (580) 353-7900

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SAMHSA Announces Availability of a New Brochure: [Drugs, Alcohol and HIV/AIDS: A Consumer Guide](#)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment recently released English- and Spanish-language versions of a new brochure, "Drugs, Alcohol and HIV/AIDS: A Consumer Guide". The brochure is for substance abuse treatment program clients who may be involved in risky behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS. The information in the brochure is based on Treatment Improvement Protocol 37, Substance Abuse Treatment for Persons With HIV/AIDS. The brochure answers questions such as:

- What do drugs and alcohol have to do with HIV?
- What if I already have HIV?
- What if I can't stop using drugs or alcohol?
- What if I can't handle all of this alone?

Helpful phone numbers and Web links are listed on the back cover of the brochure, along with a reference to SAMHSA's Treatment Facility Locator www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

To order FREE copies of Drugs, Alcohol and HIV/AIDS and Drogas, Alcohol y el VIH/SIDA, contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI). Ask for publication order number PHD1126 (English) or PHD1134 (Spanish).

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HIV/AIDS Advocates Interested in HIV Receive Honors

The Champions of Health awards ceremony took place on October 30, 2006, at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

Nicole Nascenzi, a reporter for the Tulsa World, won the Health and Medical Media Champion award. Nascenzi chronicled the life of an AIDS survivor and shared stories of others fighting this challenge. Nascenzi spent more than six months documenting the life of a long-term AIDS survivor. The series captured the challenges of AIDS, as well as the strength of survivors and compassion of advocates and care providers. She also raised money for the Tulsa AIDS Walk in 2005.

The **African American Faith Community for AIDS Prevention** -- Oklahoma City (**AAFCAP**) won the Minority Health Champion award. AAFCAP is a coalition of 15 faith leaders and congregations working together to increase awareness of HIV and AIDS in the Black community. The organization has developed and implemented effective educational programs for over five years, formed a national training manual and annual training program for pastors and faith leaders across the country, as well as an informational web site, www.aafcap.org

The Champions of Health awards program was started in 2004 by five organizations: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Hospital Association, Oklahoma Osteopathic Association and Oklahoma State Medical Association.

National HIV/AIDS Hotline Replaced by CDC-INFO

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National HIV/AIDS Hotline (800) 342-2437 is now part of (800) CDC-INFO, the new one source for public health information from CDC. Calls to the CDC HIV/AIDS hotline number are automatically being forwarded to CDC-INFO until Dec. 31. This new service provides English, Spanish, and TTY service - (888) 323-6348, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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HIV/STD CONFERENCE HUGE SUCCESS



On November 29, 2006, the Oklahoma HIV/STD conference was held at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. Approximately 300 people registered to attend this event. The conference proved to be highly successful, thanks to the efforts of its statewide volunteer committee.

Keynote topics and speakers for the conference included the following:

- **Syphilis and HIV Co-Infection**, Dr. Bruce Furness, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington, DC
- **At the Crossroads: New Realities, New Directions**, Kandy Ferree, CEO, National AIDS Fund of Washington, DC
- **A Sharpened Perspective on Improving Access to Testing and Treatment for African Americans**, Rodney Goodie, Houston, TX

Workshop topics included:

- **An ad campaign focusing on syphilis and men having sex with men (MSM) population** presented by Melissa VanDyne and Lesha Dennis, Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services
- **How to Navigate the System** included a panel of long-term HIV survivors and those living with co-infection. Rachel Morse with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services facilitated the panel.
- **Methamphetamine Abuse** presented by Agent Allen Lane, II, Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics*
- **Linking African American Women In Care** presented by Rodney Goodie, Saint Hope Clinics, Houston, TX
- **Hepatitis B And Co-Infection With Hepatitis C And/Or HIV** co-presented by Jan Fox, MPH, RN, and Debbie Purton, RN, Oklahoma State Department of Health, HIV/STD Service
- **Living with HIV and/or Co-Infections Including TB, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.** Panel members were Linda Machado, MD; Michelle Salvaggio, MD and Staci Lockhart, PharmD, OU Health Sciences Center
- **STD/HIV Education for Youth** presented by Jana Knol, MEd, OU Health Sciences Center, Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Resources and Treatment Services
- **Homophobia and Stigma** presented by Tommy Chesbro, MHR, Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, Inc.

*The Methamphetamine Abuse workshop in the morning was standing room only so Agent Lane graciously agreed to repeat the presentation that afternoon.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) HIV/STD Service and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services in coordination with the Public Health Institute of Oklahoma.

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INFORMATION CORNER

Looking for statistics? Information about Oklahoma's statistics for HIV/AIDS/STDs is available from the HIV/STD Service on a quarterly basis. Go to <http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/hivstd/epi/Stats.htm>

Free live and archived coverage of events on various subjects, such as [Medicare](#), [Medicaid](#), [prescription drugs](#), [health information technology](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), [minority health](#) and more are available from KaiserNetwork.org HealthCast. Go to <http://www.kaisernetwork.org/> and fill out the subscription form to access free Kaiser Daily Report news summaries, webcasts and published resources.

For information about HIV/AIDS go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>

For information about STDs go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/>

Exciting new HIV/AIDS/STD training is on the horizon. The HIV/STD Service training department is in the process of developing online courses for HIV and STD trainings. Be on the look out for the new and improved courses coming soon!

The HIV/STD Service offices will be closed December 25, January 1, January 15 and February 19 for state recognized holidays

OOPS!

In the last edition of the Enewsletter the address for the IDI clinic was listed incorrectly.

The correct address is:
Infectious Disease Institute
College of Medicine, OUHSC
Presbyterian Professional Building
711 Stanton L. Young Blvd.
Suite **430**
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

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