

# DISEASE INTERVENTION SERVICES

For the Provider



## What are Disease Intervention Services?

Disease Intervention Services are a critical part of a comprehensive array of services offered to persons newly identified with HIV and/or syphilis. By identifying persons with HIV and/or syphilis, and confidentially notifying their partners of their possible exposure, and providing persons who are positive and their partners a range of medical, prevention, and psychosocial services, Disease Intervention Services can improve the health not only of individuals, but of communities as well.

## Goals

1. Provide services to persons with HIV and/or syphilis, including providing them risk-reduction counseling, linking them to medical care, and making referrals to other services.
2. Ensure that sex and drug-injection partners of persons with HIV and/or syphilis are notified of their exposure, providing counseling and testing, treated or linked to medical care if needed, and provided other appropriate referrals.
3. Reduce future rates of transmission by aiding in early diagnosis.

## How is Disease Intervention Services Initiated?

All positive HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea and Chlamydia results are required to be reported to the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). Upon report, a member of the surveillance staff determines if the client is eligible for Disease Intervention Services. If the client is eligible for these services, the information will be sent to the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) to initiate.

## Who is eligible for Disease Intervention Services?

Most people who are newly diagnosed with HIV and/or syphilis are eligible for Disease Intervention Services.

**20%**  
Of partners tested by  
**Partner Services**  
test positive for HIV  
and were previously  
undiagnosed

## Who are the DIS?

DIS are highly trained, **non-clinical**, public health professionals with applied knowledge of HIV and Syphilis. The DIS interview all persons newly identified with HIV and/or syphilis to provide services including, but not limited to, Partner Services and Linkage to Care.

## What Services are provided by the DIS?

*Linkage to Care:* If an HIV positive client has not made a medical appointment for HIV care; the DIS will assist the client in making his or her first appointment.

*Treatment:* DIS will arrange for treatment needed for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

*Confidential Partner Notification:* DIS will discuss the need of notifying sexual and needle-sharing partners of the possible exposure with the positive client. The DIS will work with the client to create a plan to inform any sexual and/or needle-sharing partners about an exposure to HIV and/or syphilis.

## What happens when a DIS notifies a partner?

The DIS will confidentially notify a partner of the possible exposure to HIV and/or syphilis. This is done without providing any information about the positive person. The DIS will also provide testing and arrange treatment when needed.

## Best Practice: When the Health Department Informs Partners

*When health departments take responsibility for notification, more partners are successfully notified of their exposure. For patients, this method helps maintain their anonymity and relieves them of the burden of disclosure. Additionally, it links patients to other resources, such as counseling and risk reduction services. For the exposed partner, this method facilitates quick access to testing and linkage to care for treatment and other services.*

## What are the advantages of Disease Intervention Services for the positive person?

*Informing Partners:* DIS can notify sexual and/or needle-sharing partners of possible exposure, eliminating the burden on the positive person, allowing them to focus on his or her health.

*Confidential:* A positive person may not feel comfortable disclosing his/her status to sexual or needle-sharing partners. Partner Services provides partner notification without disclosing any information about the positive partner.

*Professional:* DIS can provide additional information regarding the disease for which the client has tested positive, arrange treatment, and provide other needed referrals. They will also discuss risk reduction techniques to reduce the risk of re-infection or infecting others.

*Safety:* Partner Services provides a safe way to reach partners and minimize risk of physical or emotional harm to the positive person.

*Empowerment:* The positive client is taking an active role in their own care and in the care of those important to them.

## What are the advantages of Disease Intervention Services for the partner?

- Partners are notified quickly of possible exposure, which they may not otherwise be aware.
- DIS offer free and confidential HIV and syphilis testing at a location that is convenient for the partner.
- DIS arrange any needed treatment or medical care.
- Partner Notification provides personalized education to those at highest risk of infection.

## What is the provider's role in Disease Intervention Services?

The connection between health care providers and clients is critical in helping to identify sexual and needle-sharing partners. Health care providers have this opportunity to prevent the further spread of STDs and HIV by informing the client the health department will be contacting them soon. This is an ideal time to inform the client of the value and importance of Partner Services. It only takes a few minutes, but presenting Partner Services in a positive light will help your clients' partners and could prevent new cases and save lives.

**Disease Intervention Services are Confidential**  
*DIS are extensively trained to maintain a client's confidentiality. Throughout the Disease Intervention process, names or identifiers (including the dates of exposure) are never revealed to the partners. The anonymity and privacy of the patient is the highest priority.*

## You Can Help!

*Educate your patients about Disease Intervention Services and its importance in preventing the spread of HIV and syphilis.*

### When to call the DIS

- Anytime you have a question about Disease Intervention Services.
- When you need assistance providing positive results to a client.
- When you need to arrange treatment for a client.
- If you need treatment recommendations.
- When you want to directly inform the DIS of a new positive (in addition to reporting it to OSDH surveillance).

### Who to Call

Disease Intervention Services is divided into two sections of the state, the eastern half and the western half.

<b>Oklahoma City Supervisor</b> <b>Portia King-Dietrich</b> 405-271-9444 or 405-306-9367	<b>Tulsa Supervisor</b> <b>William Patterson</b> 918-595-4294 or 918-290-9949	<b>Manager, Disease Intervention Services</b> <b>Casey Price</b> 918-595-4290 or 918-399-5077
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