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‘Expedited partner therapy’ a new tool to reduce STDs in Alaska

Health care providers are encouraged to take up the practice

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska continues to have some of the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in the country. The Alaska Division of Public Health is working with health care providers and other partners statewide to control these epidemics. One new approach to STD control that the division is promoting is a treatment method recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called expedited partner therapy.

Expedited partner therapy involves treating the sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea infection by providing prescriptions or medications for the patient’s partner(s) without the health care provider first examining the partner. The department released a detailed report today on an extensive evaluation of the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding expedited partner therapy among Alaska health care providers and patients. The state is encouraging all health care providers to consider adopting this practice, when appropriate.

“The report is accompanied by a *Bulletin* that provides detailed recommendations for providers as well as links to numerous online documents to facilitate the use of expedited partner therapy,” said Dr. Joe McLaughlin, state epidemiologist. “I believe we can significantly reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted disease in Alaska by getting providers to support this initiative statewide,” he said.

“We believe expedited partner therapy will be particularly effective in many areas of Alaska where people are unable or unwilling to get to a clinic on their own,” said Susan Jones, manager of the state’s HIV/STD Program. “Our study has shown that people are willing to take medication to their sex partners. We have to do all we can to curtail our gonorrhea and chlamydia epidemics in Alaska, and expedited partner therapy is one more tool we can use to help make that happen.”

For more information on expedited partner therapy go to:
<http://www.epi.alaska.gov/hivstd/ept/>

For a copy of the EPI Bulletin on expedited partner therapy go to:
http://www.epi.alaska.gov/bulletins/docs/b2011_01.pdf

For a copy of the complete report on expedited partner therapy go to:
http://www.epi.alaska.gov/bulletins/docs/rr2011_01.pdf

For more information on getting tested for STDs go to:
<http://www.gytnow.org>

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