



Provider notice

Provider Manual and Policy Changes

April 1, 2024

ADHS Syphilis Screening 2023-2024 Update

Applicable to: Mercy Care Complete, Mercy Care ACC-RBHA, Mercy Care Long Term Care, Mercy Care DD, and Mercy Care DCS CHP

ADHS recently released new recommendations for syphilis screening. These updates have occurred due to the ongoing statewide increases in congenital syphilis and syphilis in adults.

This new guidance is outlined below and also may be found online at:

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/disease-integration-services/std-control/congenital-syphilis/index.php#cs-providers>

Health care provider screening recommendations:

- *NEW: Screen sexually active individuals aged 15 to 44 for syphilis annually.*
 - Adopted from [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) guidance.
- *NEW: Implement opt-out screening for syphilis for pregnant people and people of childbearing capacity with unknown pregnancy status in Emergency Departments, Urgent Care, and other health care and/or outreach settings, including settings that serve people with addiction/Substance Use Disorder.*
 - **Settings where follow-up is uncertain:** use a rapid/point of care test and offer [same-day treatment](#) following a positive result prior to discharge.

Clinicians should continue to:

- Screen all pregnant women at first prenatal visit, third trimester, and delivery regardless of risk.
- Create electronic reminder systems for clinicians to screen for syphilis if there is no documented screening after 1st prenatal visit and/or after 32-week visit.
- Ensure all positive syphilis screens are followed up with appropriate treatment. Encourage those patients screening positive in the ED or Urgent Care to follow up with their PCP for ongoing care.
- Screen sexually active men who have sex with men (MSM) annually and every 3-6 months if at increased risk.

Recommendations for correctional settings:

- **NEW: Implement opt-out screening prior to discharge for people of childbearing capacity/pregnant people AND for people with substance use disorder in correctional settings: Use rapid tests and treat if inmates are released prior to receiving test results and treatment.**
 - *UPDATED: Include opt-out screening for syphilis in settings that serve people with addiction/Substance Use Disorder.*

Additional requirements:

- **[Report new diagnoses of syphilis](#) to the local health department within five business days.**
- Adhere to the CDC [2021 treatment guidelines](#).
- Encourage patients with primary, secondary, or early syphilis to notify their sex partners, and encourage those partners to seek testing and treatment. [Local health departments](#) provide confidential STI testing and treatment for sex partners.

If you have questions regarding the new screening recommendations, please contact sti@azdhs.gov. You can find this [Notice](#) and all other provider notices on our Mercy Care website.

Thanks for all you do!

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