



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
*Olympia, Washington 98504*

Title: STD Management during COVID-19

Audience: STD Medical Providers

Dear Provider:

The Washington Department of Health Office of Infectious Disease would like to take this opportunity to remind you of some options that are available to you as you care for your patients and their partners during the coronavirus pandemic.

As the need for social distancing changes your ability to see patients face-to-face, please remember that telemedicine visits and **presumptive treatment** are acceptable practices for uncomplicated symptomatic infections and exposures. If a patient reports symptoms or exposure to someone with an STD, providers may be able to treat them without having laboratory test results available (this includes not having collected a specimen at all for testing). **Medical providers should advise all presumptively treated patients to be tested as soon as practicable, and to seek further medical attention if symptoms persist.**

Please find, posted alongside this letter, guidance from the CDC on management of STD during this challenging time. It is focused on syndromic management of patients based on symptoms when laboratory services are not available, or treating with oral medications when injectable medications are not feasible due to reduced clinical resources or clinic closures.

While it is ideal to collect specimens for HIV and STD testing concurrently with presumptive treatment, we understand that due to requirements for social distancing and redirection of clinical resources and space to attend to patients with coronavirus, the ability to collect specimens from patients may be reduced or eliminated.

One practice that may assist in collecting specimens for testing is that patients may **self-collect specimens** (like urine, vaginal, rectal) for chlamydia and gonorrhea testing. This practice can reduce face-to-face time with a patient.

Please remember that Expedited Partner Therapy (**EPT**) is an option for some partners to persons diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea. This strategy may be helpful for exposed partners that cannot be seen in a clinical environment. Although some safety net clinical services providers and local health jurisdictions maybe able to provide WA DOH 340B purchased EPT medications dependent on staffing capacity, these

medications can also be prescribed to patients or to their partners to be picked up at pharmacies and covered by their insurance payer.

Please continue to report laboratory confirmed cases of HIV and sexually transmitted disease to your local health jurisdiction (LHJ). Recently revised case report forms for all LHJs are available [online](#), as are [recently revised DOH clinical and investigative guidelines](#). Additionally, the STD screening and treatment guidelines can be located on the [CDC website](#). The CDC guidelines posted alongside this letter are a supplement to assist in managing these infections during the COVID-19 crisis, but once medical resources can return to more normal operations, providers should follow the recommendations in the standard CDC guidelines.

Please contact us or your local health jurisdiction if you have any other questions regarding STD testing, treatment, or follow up. Thank you for your continuing partnership in HIV and STD testing, treatment, and control, and for your commitment to public health.

Sincerely,

**Zandt Bryan**

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