

Talk to your patients  
about *preventing* the  
spread of STDs & HIV





## **WHAT IS PARTNER NOTIFICATION?**

Partner notification is the process of contacting persons who have had sex with someone newly diagnosed with STDs, including HIV. Your patient's partners can be confidentially notified that they have been exposed. Partners need to be notified as soon as possible so they can prevent becoming infected and avoid complications or, if they are infected, they can avoid passing an STD or HIV on to others. At-risk partners will be discreetly notified by a disease intervention specialist (DIS) who will maintain your patient's confidentiality and anonymity.

A close-up, black and white photograph of a person's eye, looking directly at the camera. The eye is the central focus, with the iris and pupil clearly visible. The surrounding skin and eyelashes are softly blurred, creating a sense of depth and intimacy. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the texture of the skin and the intensity of the gaze.

## *why* PARTNERS NEED TO KNOW

Partner notification can help stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV and prevent complications. Too often, people who have high-risk sexual activities are unaware or deny their risk for STDs and HIV because they are asymptomatic. Partners need to know as soon as possible that this is a serious problem and they can be confidentially tested and treated for free. They need to receive immediate testing and treatment to prevent complications such as infertility, prenatal and neonatal infections, and other very serious health problems.

## *Partner Notification Services: Important Actions You Should Take*

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**Direct your patients with STDs to the STD Control Program.** As a medical provider, you can call the STD Control Program for assistance with partner notification activities. A disease intervention specialist (DIS) will then confidentially contact your newly diagnosed patient, infected with gonorrhea, chlamydia, or syphilis to arrange an interview. Please let your patient know the DIS may contact them to offer help in locating partners. The DIS also can help out with your infected patients who do not return for treatment by attempting to locate and encourage them to follow-up with you or another medical provider.

**Get the disease intervention specialist involved.** The main reason for getting the DIS involved is that most patients don't inform their own partners. When infected individuals do tell their partners, the reaction can be emotional, even violent. DIS are professionals trained to confidentially inform those at risk. Many patients prefer to have a DIS notify their partners so they can remain anonymous and avoid telling their partners. Another good reason for getting the DIS involved is to provide partners with appropriate information about free STD testing, treatment, prevention, and referrals.

**Fulfill your responsibilities while supporting your patients and their partners.** You are required to report the STDs listed under Connecticut General Statute 19a-215 and Public Health Codes 19a-36-A2 through 19a-36-A4. This helps break the chain of infection while also helping your patients avoid potentially emotional or violent confrontations with their partners. You can be assured that your patients and their partners will be treated with respect and will receive appropriate referrals for additional services. For details about reporting regulations, contact the Connecticut STD Control Program at (860) 509-7920.

**Connect your patients infected with HIV to the STD Control Program.** A DIS can assist you and your patient with notifying partners at risk for HIV. Through HIV partner notification services, at-risk partners are discreetly notified while maintaining your patient's confidentiality and anonymity.

**Involve a DIS.** A DIS can notify your patients' partners for them, accompany your patient when they inform their partners, or coach your patient if they choose to notify their partners on their own about exposure to HIV. It is often more successful if a DIS is involved in the notification process. Each DIS is trained to convey accurate information about HIV exposure, to encourage people to get tested, to link them to early medical care if they have HIV, and to teach people how to protect themselves and others from HIV. They also can help people get free testing and treatment for other STDs.

**Meet your responsibility to prevent the spread of HIV by contacting the STD Control Program.** To learn more about HIV partner notification and the AIDS Confidentiality Law, call **(860) 509-7920** and request a copy of the *Health Care Providers Guide to Connecticut's HIV/AIDS Partner Notification Services*.

## **STD Control Program (including HIV) Partner Notification Services**

Ask to speak to a disease intervention  
specialist (DIS) • (860) 509-7920



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