

DDP MONTHLY E-BULLETIN: AUGUST 2024



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SYPHILIS TREATMENT AND CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS UPDATES FOR PROVIDERS

July 23, 2024

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to share an update on the national shortage of Penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A[®]), as well as updates on syphilis trends and clinical manifestations in Virginia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shared an update from Pfizer on June 10, 2024, noting that the manufacturer has available supply of 2.4 million Units/4 milliliter Bicillin L-A[®]. In light of this update, please treat all patients with syphilis who are unable to access Bicillin L-A from your wholesaler or the manufacturer, please refer patients to the manufacturer's website for alternative treatment options. Alternative treatment options are also described in my letter from June 2023.

Source: VDH Clinician Letter, July 23, 2024

Email this page

STD/Syphilis Updates

Syphilis Updates Included in VDH Clinician Letter

On July 23, 2024, **VDH Commissioner Karen Shelton** published a letter to health professionals in Virginia sharing several important updates about syphilis in Virginia:

- Pfizer has alerted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that it has available doses of Bicillin 2.4mu available for purchase, effectively ending the shortage that began in 2023.
- Cases of early syphilis and syphilis of late or unknown duration in Virginia increased 16% and 30%, respectively.
- Twelve cases of congenital syphilis have been identified so far in 2024, putting Virginia on track to exceed the number of cases identified in 2023 (21).
- Cases of early syphilis increasingly occur among patients who self-report use of cocaine, methamphetamine, or opioids. In 2023, 11% of cases occurred among persons who reported use of one of these substances.
- Syphilis should be included in the differential diagnosis for clients in clients with **neurological, ocular (eye), or otic (ear) complaints**. These clinical manifestations of syphilis occur in 2-3% of cases and can occur at any stage.

Providers can help address increases in syphilis by **prescribing DoxyPEP** for patients who are clinically indicated, **expanding testing** in counties with elevated rates of syphilis, and following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for **serologic screening, staging, and treatment of syphilis**.

VHARCC Training Calendar

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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Mpox Updates

Tell us About Your Mpox Work!

We want to hear about the great mpox outreach work your organization is doing!

If your organization conducts any mpox outreach, please complete and submit the [REDCap Survey for LHD and CBO Mpox Event and Activity Reporting](#) form by the last day of each month. It should include the activities performed in the prior month.

We recently updated the survey to capture additional mpox activities, including social media posts, outreach and education efforts, information tables, presentations, handouts, flyers, and vaccine outreach events.

If you haven't submitted a form recently, it's not too late to catch us up on activities you've done from February 1 through July of this year by submitting a form now! This information will be included in grant reports to the CDC regarding our mpox efforts in Virginia. Thank you for your continued support in Virginia's mpox response.

Holistic and Syndemic Approaches for Disease Prevention

In April 2023, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB) [issued a program letter](#) on the role of Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) in addressing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and mpox. Since last year, the United States has continued to experience an increase in STIs, which significantly impacts people with HIV.

HRSA HAB has released a [new program letter](#) that provides information on the CDC's new [clinical guidelines](#) on the use of doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxyPEP) for prevention of bacterial STIs. DoxyPEP is a novel use of an STI medication for prevention that has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing the incidence of bacterial STIs in certain populations – specifically syphilis, chlamydia, or gonorrhea.

In the program letter, HRSA HAB recommends that RWHAP receipts adopt the CDC's doxyPEP guidelines to offer this new prevention intervention for populations who would likely benefit from this intervention. Specifically, they encourage the use of RWHAP funds to purchase doxycycline for eligible clients and for RWHAP Part B Drug Assistance Programs to add doxycycline to their formularies to ensure access and coverage.

As a reminder, the Virginia AIDS Medication Program (VA MAP) already includes doxycycline on its [RWHAP formulary list](#).

To help educate patients and providers about the use of doxyPEP, you can access our online resources:

- [DoxyPEP Patient Fact Sheet](#)
- [DoxyPEP Patient Fact Sheet \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [DoxyPEP Provider Fact Sheet](#)

NPIN Webinar: How to Build Impactful Connections with Diverse Communities

Join NPIN on Thursday, August 22, at 1 p.m. EST for their webinar “How to Build Impactful Connections with Diverse Communities.” The training focuses on:

- The importance of culture in healthcare communication, and
- Emphasizing how cultural competence and humility can improve health outcomes.

The session also encourages networking for future collaboration.

[Register for the training online.](#)



CHPG Seeks New Members

The Community HIV Planning Group (CHPG) is seeking passionate individuals committed to making a difference! As a member, you'll contribute to strategic planning and decision-making processes that directly impact our community's health initiatives. Whether you bring expertise in healthcare, advocacy, or community engagement, your voice will matter and make a difference.

Learn more about CHPG on our [Get Involved webpage](#).

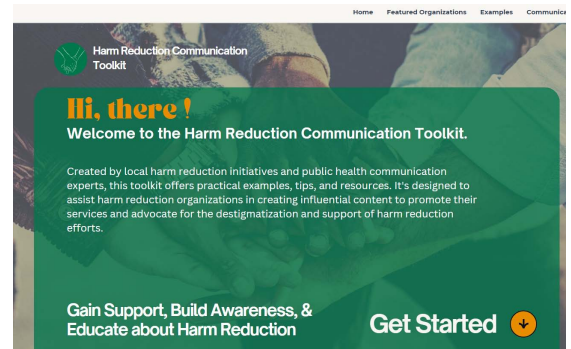
New members will join the group in October 2024. Don't miss out on this chance to drive meaningful change. **The application period has been extended to August 31, 2024.**

Apply today online!

ORAU's Harm Reduction Communications Toolkit and Survey

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recently collaborated with Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) and eight local harm reduction programs to develop community-tailored harm reduction marketing and communications campaigns and a toolkit. For those unable to join the webinar with KFF, you can [find the toolkit online](#).

ORAU is looking for constructive feedback on the toolkit. If you attended the webinar or if you access it now and have thoughts, please [provide any feedback](#) you may have.



Personnel

DDP Teammates of Quarter 2

- **HIV Care Services:** Shameka Davis
- **HIV and Hepatitis Prevention (HHP):** Melody Cunningham
- **HIV and Hepatitis Surveillance (HHS):** Denise Artis
- **STD Prevention and Surveillance (SPS):** Ben “Jay” Melton
- **DDP Small Group:** *The Northern SPS Team* – Jess Gasvoda, Remy Ndayizeye, Courtney Gonzalez, Lauren Childs, Zimako Chuks, Sammar Butt, Amadu Barrie, Suzana Salhi, and Kimberly Gyimah



Congratulations

Congratulations to **Erik Jarvis** on his promotion to Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) Project Coordinator. His first day in his new role was July 10. Prior to accepting this role, he worked on MMP for over five years as an MMP Epidemiologist/Data Collector. Erik will have the same email, but new phone numbers: (804) 864-7341 (office), and (804) 356-3918 (cell).

DDP congratulates **Antiona “Tiona” Bowman** on her promotion to FTE Comprehensive Harm Reduction (CHR) Program Specialist. This change in role begins August 26, 2024. In her new role, Tiona will continue to serve as a contract administrator for authorized CHR sites across the Commonwealth. She will provide input in developing and implementing drug user health program activities, including process improvement. Tiona started at VDH in 2021 as a Ryland Roane fellow and has progressed in her knowledge and roles, becoming the contract program specialist in the CHR program in 2022. Before coming to VDH, Tiona worked with several community organizations related to transgender health, HIV prevention and care, and STD prevention and treatment, with a focus on the LGBTQ+ community. She also served as an ambassador for Virginia in the KFF Let’s Talk About PrEP campaign. In 2023, Tiona was selected by the National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) to participate in the Minority Leadership Program, a development and investment program for persons of color working at various levels in state- or CDC-funded health department positions in HIV/AIDS or viral hepatitis programs. Tiona’s contact information will remain the same.



HHP welcomes **Brianna Carey** as the HIV CTR Program Coordinator. She will start in this role on August 26, 2024. Brianna will manage statewide activities for HIV testing in health departments, clinical, non-clinical, and pharmacy settings. Previously, Brianna worked with the SPS unit as the STD Program Analyst, where she was responsible for leading the DDP Security and Confidentiality Guidelines work group, retaining DDP records appropriately with the Library of Virginia, as well as monitoring agreements with local health districts to fund DIS services. Prior to VDH, Brianna worked as an Associate Specialist for Environmental Health at the Association of Public Health Laboratories. Brianna can be reached at (804) 338-4829 or brianna.carey@vdh.virginia.gov.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are listed on jobs.virginia.gov. Additionally, current contract positions are listed on the [DDP website](#).

Please visit either site to see detailed information for available positions.