

Formalizing Partnerships: How Regional Coalitions in Sexual Health Can Address the STI Epidemic

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Background

- From 2014 to 2019, Colorado recorded a 141% increase in all stage syphilis cases, a 178.3% increase in gonorrhea cases and a 26.7% increase in chlamydia cases.
- To address the rising STI rates in Denver Metro Area (DMA), leaders at the Denver Prevention Training Center (DPTC), Denver Public Health, and the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) supported the establishment of the Denver Metro STI Coalition (DMSC), a collective impact group.
- Collective Impact groups have a long history in aiding public health crises, most notably the HIV epidemic.

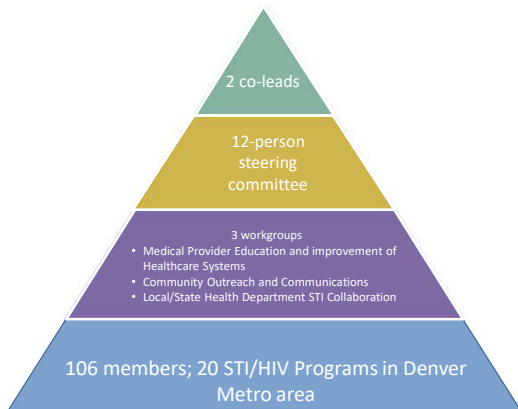
Objectives

Mission: Uniting the Denver Metro to improve the sexual health of all communities.

Goals:

- Increase access to STI prevention, screening, testing, and treatment.
- Improve community and provider awareness and education.
- Reduce STI health disparities.

Methods



Results

- Products from the DMSC include:**
 - Congenital syphilis infographic for providers (Figure 1)
 - Get Off While Maintaining Your Distance: Sex and Staying Safer during COVID-19 toolkit (Figure 2)
- Advised** on the use of data dashboards at the regional and state level public health websites.
- Quarterly meetings:**
 - Disseminated information around novel local programs for STI control and changes in STI guidelines
 - Communicated updates on shortages of used in STI control, and share information on shortages in gonorrhea and chlamydia nucleic acid amplification tests during COVID-19

Timeline of DMSC Activities to Date



Figure 1: Congenital Syphilis Health Advisory

Figure 2: Get Off While Maintaining Your Distance: Sex and Staying Safer during COVID-19 Infographic

Conclusions

- DMSC Groupsite has been established to disseminate important information about STI testing shortages, CDC STI updates, and local STI health alerts.
- DMSC products and activities:
 - Facilitated optimized local delivery of up-to-date advances and challenges in STI screening and care
- Increased awareness of local epidemiology that disproportionately affected client
- Highlighted local barriers to care
- Created resources that were shared broadly to increase client education
- Facilitate improved services not only in participating organizations but also among organizations in the area served.

Implications

- STIs are diagnosed more often in private practices, urgent cares, and hospital systems.
- Improving the care of patients with STIs in local jurisdictions requires a group effort.
- Formation and continuation of jurisdictional collective impact groups is another tool to address the STI epidemic.
- Provided a structure for leveraging local partnerships, sharing information, expanding healthcare provider STI knowledge and improving STI infrastructure in a metropolitan area.
- Especially impactful in addressing barriers to STI care that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.