

## WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF DISEASE INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS IN PARTNER SERVICES?

Partner Services is a confidential service available to people who have syphilis or HIV (and for some who have gonorrhea and/or chlamydia) and need to inform their sex partners of exposure. Partner Services allows a person to be confidentially informed of their exposure and treated if necessary.

In the United States, Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) are specially trained workers who focus on sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV. In Nebraska, they work from State and local health departments to stop the spread of STIs and HIV through confirming adequate treatment of patients with syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and referring HIV positive patients to care. DIS also are skilled at providing risk reduction information to patients and assisting them with the informing of their exposed partners so testing and treatment may be provided to them. DIS operate under Nebraska State Statute Chapter 71, Sections 74.501 - 71,516.04 and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Regulations Title 173: Control of Communicable Disease which gives them legal authority to conduct case investigations.

### Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Sexual Health Clinic

<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Health-Department/Community-Health-Services#section-7>

### Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Communicable Disease Program

<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Health-Department/Public-Health-Informatics-and-Planning/Communicable-Disease>

### Nebraska State Department of Health STD Program

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/STD-Prevention.aspx>

### 2021 Sexually Transmitted Infection Treatment Guidelines

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/guidelines/default.htm>

## Contact Us

Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department  
Disease Intervention Specialists  
3131 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68510  
(402) 441-8050

Please call (402) 441-8065 to schedule an appointment. Walk-in customers welcome.

### Sexual Health Clinic

Complete laboratory testing for:

- Syphilis
- Gonorrhea (includes oral and rectal testing)
- Chlamydia (includes oral and rectal testing)
- HIV\* (rapid)
- HPV wart diagnosis and treatment
- Trichomoniasis\* (females, males reporting contact)
- Yeast\*
- Bacterial vaginosis\*
- Herpes blood test (additional fee)

\*Same day results available.

Everyone is examined by an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN).

**Hours:** Tuesdays, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm  
Thursdays, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

### Express STI Clinic

- Urine collected for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing
- Results available in 5-7 days
- Must not have urinated at least one hour prior to collection
- No examination
- Does NOT include oral/rectal testing nor HIV

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

### HIV Walk-in Clinic

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm  
Thursday, 8:00 am to 7:00 pm

[www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Health-Department](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Health-Department)

## WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STI/HIV PARTNER SERVICES



LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO REDUCE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

STI PREVENTION



Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

## WHAT INFECTIONS ARE COVERED BY PARTNER SERVICES?

- • • New syphilis cases (all cases must have an investigation completed by a DIS if infectious syphilis less than one year's duration is suspected).
- • • New cases of HIV diagnosed within the past year.
- • • Gonorrhea and chlamydia cases may be investigated depending on availability of staff and morbidity of the area.



## HOW IS MY PATIENT'S CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTED?

Confidentiality is the main priority of the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS). They receive specialized training coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention so they can inform exposed sex or needle-sharing contacts to STI or HIV infections without giving any information to the partner that may allow them to identify the person who referred them to the DIS. Therefore, nothing pertaining to age/sex/race of patient, when the exposure occurred, type of exposure, residence of patient, etc., is ever given to the partner being referred to testing or treatment.

## WHAT DOES THE DIS DISCUSS DURING PARTNER SERVICES?

The DIS will talk with the patient about a number of topics pertaining to their STI or HIV infection. The DIS will identify the patient's understanding of the disease and medication, discuss risks associated with the infection, suggest behavioral changes to avoid future infections, and decide the best ways to inform partners who have been exposed to this infection. All of these topics are patient-centered and focus on patient's needs based on his or her situation. DIS are trained to be culturally and socially sensitive to all patients and to work diligently to support the improvement of the patient's health instead of policing the patient's behavior. DIS will determine the best way to notify a person's contacts and then confidentially refer a contact to testing and prophylactic treatment, if needed.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF PARTNER SERVICES?

- • • Since many STIs can be asymptomatic, it is critical that people exposed are informed of their exposure. This will allow their contacts to obtain early testing and treatment if results are positive or receive prophylactic treatment to interrupt incubating infection if negative. Your patient is at increased risk of reinfection from sex partners who are not notified of exposure and evaluated for disease.

- • • All STIs have been steadily rising in the United States and in Nebraska for the past few years, costing millions of dollars, as well as painful and tragic health consequences from sequelae, such as deformity or death in newborns, infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, vision loss, dementia, etc. DIS are trained to intervene in the spread of these infections as well as to work with patients and their partners on reducing the risk for future infections.

## HOW CAN I HELP ENSURE EXPOSED CONTACTS TO MY PATIENT ARE NOTIFIED OR TREATED FOR STI/HIV EXPOSURE?

Consider dispensing or prescribing oral medication directly to your patients for them to deliver to their partners to treat chlamydia or gonorrhea (Expedited Partner Therapy or EPT).

Encourage your patients diagnosed with syphilis, gonorrhea, or chlamydia to not engage in sexual contact with their untreated partners. Encourage patients to ensure all sexual partners have been treated for 7 days prior to future sexual contact. Contacts to syphilis should be referred to a DIS for testing and treatment. Contacts to gonorrhea and chlamydia can be referred to a medical provider or clinic that can test and deliver treatment.

Encourage your patients with syphilis to speak openly with the DIS when contacted, stressing confidentiality and the importance of this interaction to assist with the management of their infection.

Discuss with all patients diagnosed with STIs or HIV the importance of partner notification and help the patient contact their local DIS for help.

Call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department for questions or assistance. (see next page)