



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) – Alert**

MESSAGE ID: MSHAN-20230307-00591-ALT (Health Alert)
RECIPIENTS: All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, PAs, and
Healthcare Providers – Statewide
Tuesday, March 7, 2023
SUBJECT: Emergency Addition of Syphilis Infection During Pregnancy as a
Reportable Disease and Requirement of Syphilis Testing During
Pregnancy

Dear Colleagues,

- In the last several years, Mississippi has experienced sharp increases in the number of reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis. Between 2016 and 2020, reported primary and secondary syphilis cases rose by more than 125%, to 741 cases and a rate of 24.9 cases per 100,000 population in 2020, tied for the highest rate among US states (CDC Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report, 2020 [Tables - Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2020 \(cdc.gov\)](#)).
- Mississippi has seen an even more rapid rise in cases of congenital syphilis during this timeframe, jumping more than 1100% from 2019 to 2020, to 37 reported cases and a rate of 101 cases per 100,000 live births in 2020, ranking eighth nationally. By comparison, only nine total cases of congenital syphilis were reported in Mississippi between 2016 and 2019. Preliminary data for 2021 demonstrates a continuation of this significant trend.
- To address this re-emerging disease of public health concern, the following emergency modifications to the Rules and Regulations Governing Reportable Diseases and Conditions in Mississippi are **immediately effective**.
 - Syphilis infection in pregnancy is explicitly added to the list of Reportable Diseases and Conditions as a Class 1B disease, requiring reporting to the Mississippi State Department of Health by telephone within one business day of first knowledge or suspicion. Reports should be made to the STD/HIV Office at 601-576-7723.
 - All Mississippi physicians and medical practitioners providing prenatal care to pregnant people are required to:
 - Perform syphilis testing for all pregnant people in their first trimester (or at the initial visit for prenatal care) and again in the third trimester (28-32 weeks).
 - Perform syphilis testing for all pregnant people at the time of delivery if no documentation of syphilis testing during the current pregnancy is available or the patient has received no prior prenatal care in the current pregnancy.
 - Ensure appropriate treatment for syphilis infections during pregnancy, per the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) treatment guidelines ([2021 STI Treatment Guidelines – Syphilis](#): Updated diagnostic, treatment, and screening recommendations for STIs (July 22, 2021)).
 - Ensure appropriate reporting of syphilis infection in pregnancy to MSDH.

Regards,

Paul Byers, MD
State Epidemiologist



Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program: **MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)**
Message Identifier: CDCHAN-20230307-00591-**ALT**
Program (HAN) Type: **Health Alert**
Status (Type): Actual ()
Message Type: Alert
Reference: MSHAN-00591
Severity: Unknown
Acknowledgement: No
Sensitive: Not Sensitive
Message Expiration: Undetermined
Urgency: Undetermined
Delivery Time: 600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**)).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages.

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

- Actual: Communication or alert refers to a live event
- Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
- Test: Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

Message Type:

- Alert: Indicates an original Alert
- Update: Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
- Cancel: Indicates prior alert has been cancelled



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Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of “Update” or “Cancel”, this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. “n/a” = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration:

Undetermined.

Urgency:

Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time:

Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).