Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

How Expedited Partner Therapy Could Reduce Adolescent STD Rates in 200 Words

Adolescent Health & Well-Being

Date Posted:

Oct 26, 2017



Last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report showing there were two million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in 2016, an all-time high for new infections. The same report also estimates that youth ages 15-24 acquire half of new STD infections.

These statistics speak to the need for collaboration among public health researchers, clinicians and policymakers to find innovative solutions that will both prevent new STD infections and treat current ones. One method that I'm particularly interested in is expedited partner therapy, or EPT, wherein a clinician provides medication or a prescription of medication to a patient to give to their partner.

EPT provides a few key benefits:

- Patients treated for STDs are often at risk of reinfection because their partners remain untreated. When both partners have access to treatment, it reduces the risk of long-term health problems from reinfections.
- While it is obviously preferable that every adolescent is evaluated by a doctor, we know that this is not always possible. EPT provides a convenient solution for youth who may not have access to a provider or feel comfortable discussing their sexual health with one.

STD rates will not go down on their own. Expanding access to treatment is key, and EPT can help us reach this imperative public health goal.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Communications Manager Lauren

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