

## *Health Alert*

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**SUBJECT:** Syphilis Outbreak

Butler County has received 39 confirmed cases of Syphilis between June 2020 and May 2021. With this significant rise, the Butler County Health Department felt it necessary to inform healthcare professionals in our community.

Syphilis is a highly contagious sexually transmitted infection (STI) that if left untreated, can cause serious health concerns. Signs or symptoms of syphilis may include: firm, round, painless sores on or around the genitals, anus, and/or mouth; skin rash; mucous membrane lesions; fever; swollen lymph glands; sore throat; patchy hair loss; headaches; weight loss; muscle aches; fatigue.

With our investigations, it has been determined that a majority of new cases have occurred among the drug using and homeless populations of our community. It is these individuals that we want to focus and prioritize.

We at the Butler County Health Department are taking steps to prevent and reduce the spread of this disease. We are starting a media campaign which will focus on reducing risk, providing education, and informing the public of our services. We are making contact with homeless agencies in the area to provide education and testing. The health department does provide STD/STI testing and treatment on a daily basis, as well as safe sex education and free condoms. It is important to note that the BCHD does not treat pregnant women; any positive case will be referred to their OBGYN.

We ask that you, as healthcare professionals, assist in our efforts by: looking for signs/symptoms in patients, providing education on the infection and safe sex practices, order testing, provide treatment, and/or referring patients to the BCHD for testing/treatment.

It is our hope that with community awareness and your help, we can combat this outbreak by raising awareness and providing treatment.

**For any questions or concerns regarding this Health Alert please contact:**

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**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.