




**Gavin Newsom**  
Mayor

**Mitchell H. Katz, MD**  
Director of Health

To: Substance use treatment providers

From: Jeffrey D. Klausner, MD, MPH   
STD Control Officer

Re: Syphilis screening of new clients and patients

Date: July 25, 2005

Over the years, we have found a strong link between substance use and risk for sexually transmitted diseases, like HIV and syphilis. Recently there have been increases in syphilis in women with a history of substance use and for 5 years now we have seen increased rates of syphilis in men who have sex with men with a history of substance use, methamphetamine use in particular.

We would like to help assure that all persons at risk for syphilis get a syphilis test. Syphilis testing is a very accurate and effective way to find new cases of syphilis than can be treated.

We suggest the following:

- 1) All substance use treatment sites have an administrative policy whereby all new clients or patients undergo syphilis testing within 7 days of program entry.
- 2) All clients or patients in substance use treatment facilities have the date and the syphilis test result of their most recent test recorded in their confidential records.
- 3) The most recent documented syphilis test result be no older than 6 months.
- 4) These recommendations apply to both residential and non-residential programs.

We have made syphilis testing easy. The San Francisco Department of Public Health provides free and same day syphilis testing at San Francisco City Clinic, 356 Seventh Street, and through [www.stdtest.org](http://www.stdtest.org). In addition, syphilis testing is available at any health department clinic, hospital and through any private medical provider.

Thank you for helping us reduce the transmission of syphilis in our community. Please contact me at 415-355-2000 for any questions.