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Congenital Syphilis Prevention in Kings County

Dear Colleagues,

I write to inform you about a significant increase in syphilis cases in fertile women. This has been observed in our neighboring counties as well as here. While the absolute number of cases remains modest, the outbreak has been associated with sharp increase in the number of cases of congenital syphilis in the region, including two in Kings County. Congenital syphilis is always preventable and is always a public health sentinel event. Per current state guidelines I assume that you currently perform syphilis screening at all first perinatal visits. I now recommend that you begin routinely repeating this screening at 28-32 weeks gestation.

The state's syphilis screening guidelines also address:

1. That a non-treponemal test (RPR or VDRL) be used for screening
2. Stat RPR be performed at delivery for any women with no prenatal care
3. No infant or mother be discharged without having the mother's status documented at least once
4. Any woman who delivers a stillborn after 20 weeks gestation should be tested for syphilis

For more details regarding these recommendations, you can find the guidelines at:

www.cdph.ca.gov/pubsforms/Guidelines/Documents/CA-STD-Screening-and-Treatment-in-Pregnancy.pdf

I don't believe that any of you are currently using either EIA or CIA based technology for screening for syphilis. If you are, please consult the Guidelines for help in interpreting the results. The correct interpretation requires some skill with these newer, cheaper screening tests.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns about my recommendation. I can be reached on my direct line at 559-852-2876. Please contact me or Lucy Thompson, FNP, with questions about syphilis diagnosis or management. Lucy's direct line is 559-852-2619.

Sincerely,

Michael Mac Lean, M.D., M.S.