



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Providers

**FROM:** El Paso Health Plans

**DATE:** October 16, 2019

**RE:** Congenital Syphilis Health Advisory – New Mandated Testing Time Frames

The Department of State Health Services has issued a health advisory to all network primary care providers to promote awareness of the issue and the new requirements for testing during the prenatal and immediate post-partum period.

Reported syphilis and congenital syphilis cases are increasing nationally and in Texas. In Texas, 367 cases of congenital syphilis were reported in 2018, which includes confirmed and probable (suspected) cases, as well as syphilitic stillbirths.

New state legislation was enacted on Sept. 1, 2019 to increase syphilis testing in pregnant women. Testing is now mandated at first prenatal care examination, during third trimester (no earlier than 28 weeks gestation) and at delivery.

Please see additional resources:

Congenital Syphilis Health Advisory – 10/03/2019 Notification  
<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/releases/2019/HealthAdvisory-10032019.aspx>

### Treatment

The treatment regimen must be appropriate for stage of infection, as detailed in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2015 Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Treatment Guidelines [www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/default.htm).

### Reporting

To facilitate timely and adequate treatment for pregnant women, DSHS recommends reporting these syphilis diagnoses within 24 hours by telephone. For more information regarding reporting, please visit [www.dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/healthcare/reporting.shtm](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/healthcare/reporting.shtm)

For more information on this correspondence please contact Provider Relations Monday – Friday 8am-5pm at 1-877-532-3778 x1507.