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**Should New York State Law Allow Medical Treatment without a Medical Encounter? Perspectives of County Health Department Professionals on the Proposed Legislation: Patient Delivered Partner Therapy for Chlamydia**

Author (s)

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**Background:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strongly encourages states to change public health law to legalize patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT) for chlamydia and gonorrhea, that is, allow physicians/providers to give their patients medication or a prescription intended for their sexual partners without a medical encounter.

**Objective:** To assess current sexually transmitted disease (STD) management practices, and to gather perspectives on PDPT and alternative treatment methods.

**Methods:** We reviewed county health department websites to assess information provided to residents regarding STD treatments, including location and hours. Telephone interviews of county officials were conducted to determine treatment provisions available, current partner notification practices and PDPT perspectives. Data were analyzed utilizing SAS. Descriptive statistics included frequencies and proportions for the categorical data.

**Preliminary Results:**

County officials are split on their viewpoint about legalizing PDPT, with about 48% for and 48% against legalization, and 4% undecided. Reasons for supporting the proposal included treating more infected individuals (65%) and improving STD control overall (31%). Reasons for lack of support included malpractice issues (17%), contraindication/side effects (25%), and antibiotic resistance (13%). Further analysis of these perspectives by county STD rates is forthcoming.

**Discussion:** It is important to obtain information from experts in the field and individuals who will be affected by policy when possible. The county officials' perspectives are polarized; further analyses will better inform our understanding these perspectives. This is one of four studies being conducted to provide information to state legislators to utilize in considering proposed legislation.