EXPEDITED PARTNER THERAPY FOR CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHEA IN ARIZONA- A CLINICAL TOOL TO INCREASE PARTNER TREATMENT AND DECREASE RE-INFECTION
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In Arizona, the rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) are steadily increasing. Treatment is critically important to controlling these diseases, especially among adolescents, young adults, and certain racial groups where rates remain high.

In April of 2008, Senate Bill 1078 was passed which amends ARS 32-1401.27 and 32-1854 to allow allopathic, naturopathic, and osteopathic physicians, or physician assistants to dispense or prescribe antimicrobial medications to contacts of patients with communicable diseases without an intervening health assessment of the partner. The application of this statute, for STDs such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, is referred to as expedited partner therapy (EPT). The law became effective September 26, 2008. EPT is now being utilized in all but 11 states.

Registered nurse practitioners in Arizona are also allowed to provide EPT as determined by the Arizona Board of Nursing.

Data has been collected from studies comparing the efficacy of EPT to standard partner therapy. Some of these findings are summarized below:

- **EPT is a useful option to facilitate partner referral among heterosexual men and women with chlamydia or gonorrhea, and to prevent re-infection of patients with chlamydia or gonorrhea.**
- **EPT may be considered for pregnant partners. However, current studies did not include analyses for this group.** (Most pregnant women already have access to healthcare and are motivated to protect the health of the fetus, factors that are likely to reduce the role of EPT.) All pregnant women should be referred for comprehensive prenatal care that includes syphilis and HIV testing in addition to chlamydia and gonorrhea. Neither azithromycin nor cefixime are contraindicated in pregnancy.
- **EPT is at least equivalent in efficacy to standard partner management for gonorrhea and chlamydia.**
- **EPT is a cost-saving and cost-effective partner management strategy.**

The standard mechanism used to assure treatment of the partners of persons with chlamydia or gonorrhea infection is patient referral, but this method has had only modest success. EPT should be considered when standard patient referral is unlikely to result in proper treatment. The common way EPT is implemented is patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT).

### Additional References: