

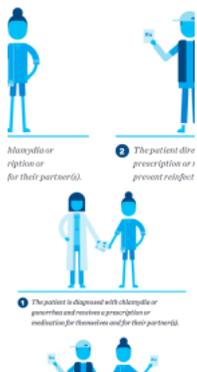
Understanding the Policy, Legal and Practice Barriers to Treating the Partners of Adolescents with Sexually Transmitted Infections

Statement of Problem

Even though adolescents and young adults account for only one quarter of the sexually active population, they acquire half of all new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) each year in the United States. Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT), the treatment of the sexual partner(s) of a patient with an STI without being seen by a medical professional for an exam or counseling, is an effective method in preventing reinfection. However, due to a variety of barriers, and potentially augmented by a complex policy environment, EPT is not used frequently in treating adolescents with STIs.

Description

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) Process



Expedited partner therapy (EPT) is a **patient-delivered partner therapy** used to help **prevent reinfection of chlamydia or gonorrhea** by providing the patient with extra medication or a prescription to give to their sex partner(s) who are **unwilling or unable to seek treatment**.

This project aims to understand current practice with respect to EPT and adolescents, potential barriers to provision of EPT, and provider knowledge of state legal policy around EPT. To learn about providers' knowledge, we will survey a sample of providers who likely treat adolescents in three differing state legal environments where EPT is: (a) explicitly legal; (b) permissible but not directly referenced in law; and (c) potentially allowable. The legal and policy teams reviewed laws and policies to categorize states in these three categories, and then we randomly selected states for the study survey.

Ultimately, we aim to inform program and policy changes to broaden the provision of EPT to adolescents and ensure that all adolescents can receive care to meet their unique health needs.

Next Steps

We plan to share results at national meetings and also partner with local organizations to implement and evaluate programs focusing on providing EPT to adolescents.

This project page was last updated in January 2019.

Suggested Citation

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, PolicyLab. *Understanding the Policy, Legal, and Practice Barriers to Treating the Partners of Adolescents with Sexually Transmitted Infections* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.policylab.chop.edu> [Accessed: plug in date accessed here].

PolicyLab Leads

Cynthia Mollen MD, MSCE

Faculty Director of Affiliate Trainee Program

Additionally, Dr. Mollen is a professor of pediatrics at the Perelman School Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, core faculty leader for the Qualitative Research Core at CHOP, faculty leader for the Qualitative Methods Research Affinity Group, and a practicing pediatric emergency medicine physician at CHOP. Dr. Mollen completed both her pediatrics residency and pediatric emergency medicine fellowship at CHOP and became a faculty member upon completing her training in 2001. She also completed the Master of Science in Clinical Epidemiology during her fellowship.

Since joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and CHOP, Dr. Mollen has developed and refined a research and clinical interest in adolescent health, with a particular focus on utilizing the emergency department and non-primary care settings as sites for interventions related to major public health issues affecting adolescents, such as unintended teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. She has also pursued training in qualitative research methods and has utilized those methods in a variety of research projects. Dr. Mollen's projects have included interviewing adolescents to learn about their attitudes about developing an intervention aimed to improve the use of emergency contraception; exploring minority adolescents' perception about bias when seeking family planning care; assessing the decision-making processes of parents with terminally ill children; and improving access to expedited partner therapy for adolescents.



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Nadia Dowshen **MD, MSHP**

Faculty Member

Nadia Dowshen (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and serves as Director of Adolescent HIV Services in the Craig Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine at CHOP. She is also an associate professor of pediatrics and the Associate Director of the Masters of Health Policy Research at the Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania and a Stoneleigh fellow.

In addition to specialized care for youth living with HIV/AIDS, Dr. Dowshen also provides general adolescent medical care at CHOP and Covenant House, PA, a youth shelter located in Philadelphia. She recently co-founded the CHOP Sexuality and Gender Development Clinic which now provides medical and psychosocial support to more than 2,000 gender variant children and adolescents. Dr. Dowshen's research focuses on using youth-friendly technology to improve adherence to antiretroviral therapy and improve other health outcomes for adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. She is also interested more broadly in research around issues of STD and HIV prevention and treatment as well as achieving health equity for other marginalized youth including LGBT and homeless adolescents.

Dr. Dowshen received the 2010 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine New Investigator Award for her research identifying protective factors against HIV infection among transgender youth. She was recently named an NIH Adolescent Trials Network (ATN) Scholar and a Best Young Investigator by the National Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR). Dr. Dowshen also serves on the Board of Directors of the Sexual Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), a national non-profit which promotes comprehensive education about sexuality, and advocates for the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. Dr. Dowshen received both her M.D. and Masters of Science in Health Policy Research from the University of Pennsylvania.



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Team

Meredith Matone

DrPH, MHS

Director

Dr. Matone's research interests include maternal and young child health, as well as family well-being. She focuses on building community and public agency research partnerships to support improvements in policies and programs that serve mothers and infants in under-resourced communities. She is experienced in large-scale program evaluation, mixed-methods research designs, and use of administrative data for observational study designs in areas of child and caregiver health.

Dr. Matone is a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, a faculty affiliate at The Field Center, and a board member of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Youth Children. Dr. Matone received her Doctor of Public Health, specializing in child and adolescent health and development, from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is an alumnus of the Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being program and a former Stoneleigh Foundation fellow.



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Related Tools & Publications

- [Variation in Practice of Expedited Partner Therapy for Adolescents by State Policy Environment Article](#)
Aug 2015
- [Preventing Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Reinfection through Increased Use of Expedited Partner Therapy Evidence to Action Briefs](#)
Dec 2016