

What Is The Partner Services Program (PSP)?

When people in Massachusetts are diagnosed with one of several sexually transmitted diseases (**STDs**), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides sexual health services. These services are all **free, voluntary, and confidential**. If your patient has been diagnosed with HIV or another **STD**, someone from our team of specially-trained staff can:

- answer questions about **STDs**
- discuss current sexual practices as well as a range of risk-reduction strategies
- support medical care engagement and, in some instances, re-engagement if patients have fallen out of care
- support linkage to other health and social services
- anonymously notify partners of a potential exposure
- assist partners with getting testing and treatment/care

Why Is Partner Notification Important?

When your patient identifies partners to be notified about a potential exposure:

- there is a reduced likelihood your patient will be infected again
- their partners are prompted to be screened and get treatment or care
- fewer people in the community will become infected or experience complications of untreated **STDs**

When we notify partners of a potential exposure, **we won't tell them the patient name, gender, or anything which would identify the patient**. We won't even tell them the date they may have been exposed. Instead, we will:

- let them know that they might have been exposed to an **STD**
- help them get tested and treated and/or into medical care if needed
- help them prevent getting or passing **STDs** in the future

How Does The Partner Services Program Help My Patients?

We work with you and your team to provide added support to your patients and their partners. After an HIV or other **STD** diagnosis, people may feel overwhelmed, confused, uncomfortable, embarrassed, or even scared, especially with regard to how to tell partners they may have been exposed. Using a client-centered, risk-reduction approach, we can help them:

- understand how **STDs** are transmitted
- identify strategies for reducing the likelihood of acquiring or transmitting **STDs** in the future
- notify partners of a potential exposure
- explain the importance of routine screenings, treatment, and/or ongoing care
- identify and address barriers that might keep someone from getting screened, treated, or remaining in care
- obtain condoms and other prevention tools

How Does The Partner Services Program Support Re-Engagement?

In certain circumstances, we can locate and assist your patients in getting re-engaged when:

- they have not returned for their **STD** diagnosis/treatment
- they have fallen out of HIV care

What Is My Role?

Providers (i.e. clinicians, test counselors, case managers, etc.) play an important role in supporting this effective public health service designed to help patients and their partners know about their **STD** status, understand how to prevent **STDs**, get tested and treated, and remain engaged with care. We ask that you collaborate with us by:

- educating patients about the range of services we provide, including partner notification
- distributing Partner Services Program materials to patients, highlighting the value of these services
- encouraging patients to utilize the Partner Services Program
- assuring patients that respect and confidentiality will be maintained

Where Can I Get More Information?

Visit www.mass.gov/dph/psp or call 617-983-6999

Where Can I Get Materials For My Patients?

Materials such as brochures and wallet cards are available at **no cost** to you on the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse.

www.maclearinghouse.com