

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CBRC Launches Education and Awareness Campaign to Address Syphilis Outbreak in Alberta

[Edmonton – June 17, 2026] While syphilis and congenital syphilis rates in Alberta have declined since peaking in 2019, transmission remains at outbreak levels across the province. Despite significant efforts to address the rise in cases, longstanding gaps in prevention, support, and engagement for gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) persist.

“Resources must continue to be mobilized to address congenital syphilis, which has emerged as a key public health challenge in recent years. However, high syphilis rates have existed for many years among gbMSM, with limited support available,” says Brook Biggin, Director of Education, Knowledge Mobilization, and Policy at CBRC. “It’s not a choice of addressing either congenital syphilis or syphilis among gbMSM. Instead, the response needs to be both/and.”

To address these gaps, the Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC) has developed a targeted suite of syphilis education and awareness resources tailored for both community members and healthcare providers across the province. Informed by CBRC’s Alberta STBBI research, provincial partner and community networks, and existing national syphilis initiatives, these resources provide clear, practical, and inclusive information tailored to Alberta’s unique context.

“With emerging tools and innovative approaches—like Doxy-PEP, which involves taking doxycycline after sex to prevent syphilis transmission—we have an opportunity to turn the tide,” says Biggin. “We are already seeing encouraging signs of progress, and by sustaining our focus and investment in addressing this outbreak, we can continue to move toward our goals. Our resources are designed to support informed decision-making, foster more open conversations about sexual health, and promote responsive, affirming care across Alberta.”

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

These three resources were created with community in mind and are intended to be accessible, visually engaging, and straightforward, while still covering the core details people need.

[Let’s Be Clear: Syphilis Is Here](#): A clear, easy-to-follow guide that explains what syphilis is, how it spreads, and what you can do about it.

[*Congenital Syphilis Guide for Alberta*](#): Information about congenital syphilis created with sexual and gender-diverse family planners in mind; especially for trans men and non-binary people planning to grow their families or thinking about pregnancy.

[*Doxy-PEP Self-Advocacy Guide*](#): A practical guide to help people talk with their health care providers and make informed decisions about doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxyPEP), a treatment that prevents bacterial STIs like syphilis by taking a single dose of the antibiotic within 72 hours after unprotected sex.

RESOURCES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The resources created for health care providers in Alberta are designed to support culturally safe, informed, and responsive care for gbMSM and Two-Spirit, queer, and trans communities in Alberta.

[*Practice Update: Use of Lidocaine and Non-Pharmacological Strategies for Pain Management in Syphilis Treatment*](#): This guide outlines evidence-informed recommendations for reducing injection-related pain while providing affirming, culturally safe care tailored to 2S/GBTQ+ communities.

[*Alberta Action Plan for Addressing Syphilis Among 2S/GBTQ+ Populations*](#): A targeted action plan with recommendations for prevention, screening, and treatment to address syphilis in Alberta's 2S/GBTQ+ communities.

[*Syphilis Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment Among 2S/GBTQ+ People in Alberta \(CBRC Sex Now 2022 and 2024 data report\)*](#): A report sharing key findings from CBRCs Sex Now survey featuring data from participants in Alberta with a focus on syphilis and the use of Doxy PrEP/PEP.

[*Online Learning Module: Culturally-Safe Syphilis Care for gbMSM*](#): An online learning module that guides health care providers in managing syphilis screening and treatment among Two-Spirit, gay, bi, trans, and queer men.

ON THE ROAD THIS SUMMER

This summer, CBRC will take these resources on the road, engaging audiences at Pride festivals throughout Alberta to expand access to information, reduce stigma, and promote testing and prevention. CBRC staff will be sharing information at the following events:

- Lethbridge Pride Fest (June 20, 2026)
- Edmonton Pride Festival (August 21 to 23, 2026)



Community-Based Research Centre

- Calgary Pride (August 21-September 6)

ABOUT CBRC

Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC) promotes the health of people of diverse sexualities and genders through research and intervention development. CBRC's core pillars of community-led research, knowledge exchange, network building, and leadership development position the organization as a thought leader, transforming ideas into actions that make a difference in our communities. CBRC was incorporated in 1999 and is a non-profit charitable organization. Our main office is located in Vancouver, British Columbia, with staff working remotely across Canada.

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