

**Testimony on Senate Bill 144
Regarding Expedited Partner Therapy**

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

**Jennifer VandeVelde
Director, Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention
Kansas Department of Health and Environment**

Chairman Suellentrop and members of the committee, my name is Jennifer VandeVelde, and I serve as the Director for the Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Thank you for the opportunity to provide supporting testimony relative to Senate Bill 144.

We strongly support this bill and the use of expedited partner therapy (EPT) for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The most common reportable infection each year in Kansas is the sexually transmitted infection chlamydia. During calendar year 2017, 13,549 cases of chlamydia were diagnosed in Kansas, with 96% of cases occurring in people of reproductive age. Left untreated, chlamydia can result in infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and in some cases, even death. Pregnant women infected with a sexually transmitted infection may experience preterm birth, and may pass the infection on to their infant during birth. Infants infected with STIs can suffer both a type of pneumonia and infection of the eyes which can lead to blindness if left untreated.

One of the most significant risk factors for complications of infected patients is repeat infection, and most repeat infections are due to re-exposure by an untreated partner. The use of EPT removes barriers to ensuring the treatment of potentially infected partners, thus reducing the risk of reinfection. EPT allows the partners of infected women to more easily obtain preventative treatment. Data shows us that the more barriers that can be removed to seeking care, the more likely it is that patients will obtain the necessary care.

EPT is supported at the national level by numerous organizations, most notably the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the National Coalition of STD Directors. In addition, EPT is currently legal in 43 states, including Missouri, Colorado, and Nebraska.

The CDC recommended treatment for chlamydia is an incredibly safe antibiotic with very few side effects and contraindications. The use of EPT in 43 states over the past decade with no major adverse events occurring further demonstrates the safety and efficacy of the treatment.

EPT is common sense public health, and put simply, it can prevent STD-related infertility and other long-term consequences.