



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 8-2008

Support for Addressing a Public Health Crisis – Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Alaska

**Sponsor: Planned Parenthood of Alaska
Clover Simon**

PROBLEM

In 2007, Chlamydia was the most frequently reported communicable disease in Alaska, with a total of 4911 cases. Alaska's overall Chlamydia rate is two times greater than the overall national rate. In addition, Alaska has ranked highest in the nation for Chlamydia rates in 2006 and 2007 and has ranked in the top ten since Chlamydia became a reportable disease in 1996.¹ Chlamydia infection rates continue to increase.²

The population most impacted by Chlamydia is females age 15-24 years. The burden of Chlamydia is in the insidious nature of asymptomatic disease causing silent and complicated infections in the reproductive organs. Chlamydia is the number one cause of pelvic inflammatory disease which leads to infertility.

This is not a concern for Alaska alone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that nationally, one in four young women (or 3.2 million teenage girls) and one in two young African-American women have a sexually transmitted disease (STD).³ John M. Douglas, Jr., M.D., director of CDC's Division of STD Prevention stresses that, "STD screening and early treatment can prevent some of the most devastating effects of untreated STDs."

Climbing, uncontrolled infection rates are a threat to the health and fertility of Alaska's youth – we need to prevent infections now.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/tables/table2.htm>

² State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin – March 21, 2008. Figure 1. Chlamydial Infection Rates – Alaska, 1996-2007.

³ CDC. <http://www.cdc.gov/STDConference/2008/media/release-11march2008.htm>

PLAN OF ACTION

This is a public health call to action that requires immediate attention and resources from the State of Alaska to reduce the burden of disease on Alaska's youth.

ALPHA shall consider joining the Healthy Families Coalition, a newly forming, grassroots, community based group that will work to address the following legislative goals, and

ALPHA, among other public health and community-based groups, shall encourage the State of Alaska, through legislation, to:

- Increase state funds allocated for identification, testing, and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Provide funding for identification of sexual partners and funding to support testing and treatment for high risk youth at little to no cost.
- Provide statewide guidance on comprehensive, medically accurate, and age appropriate sexual health education in Alaska's public schools.
- Establish a media campaign to raise awareness about this new state strategy, STD rates, medically proven best practices for avoiding STDs in Alaska, and how to access affordable testing and treatment in your community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association will promote and advocate for this four-tiered legislative proposal above and engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts to meet the same goals such as:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to membership
- Circulation of advocacy action requests to partners and other individuals
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association's website and/or making this resolution available
- Participation in email advocacy campaigns
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums
- Contribution of op-ed articles and/or letters to the editor
- Contributions to radio programs via calling-in or scheduled interviews
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials
- Encourage other Alaska based health organizations and concerned community groups to join the Healthy Families Coalition and support this common sense, community based solution to a growing health concern