

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA**

**Department of Health**

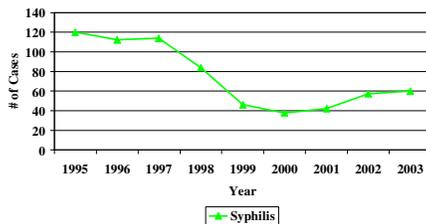


**STD Control Program**

**“Syphilis is back! Get Tested!” Campaign**

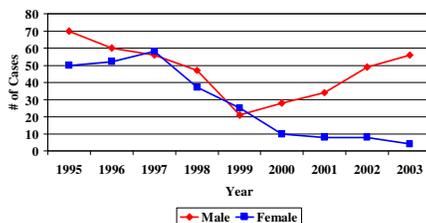
Despite decreasing case numbers between 1995 and 2000, infectious syphilis has made a dramatic comeback in the District of Columbia, from 38 cases in 2000 to 60 cases in 2003.

**Infectious Syphilis,  
Washington, DC, 1995-2003**



This increase is seen predominantly among males.

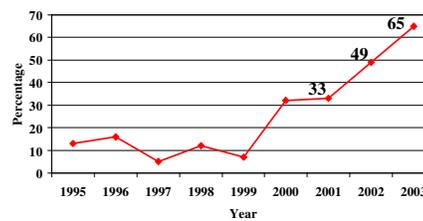
**Infectious Syphilis, by Sex,  
Washington, DC, 1995-2003**



And these males are most likely men who have sex with men (MSM). The number of cases of infectious syphilis reported in Washington, DC that self-identify as MSM has increased 187% between 2000 and 2003.

In order to stem this alarming increase of infectious syphilis cases among MSM, the STD Control Program needs to address several issues that were initially presented in an Action Memo from Ronald O.

**Percentage of Infectious Syphilis  
Cases Identified as MSM,  
Washington, DC, 1995-2003**



Valdiserri, MD, MPH, Deputy Director, National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention to HIV/STD Program Directors on November 15, 2002.

One of these important issues is:

“Meet with the owners of gay bars / baths / businesses and other community leaders in your jurisdictions to inform them of resurgent STDs among MSM, to promote the availability of publicly funded STD diagnostic and treatment services, and to encourage them to promote safer sex practices.”

Consequently, the STD Control Program has identified 14 priority MSM venues in Washington, DC and is in the process of engaging the owners / managers in our syphilis elimination efforts.

In order to educate this vulnerable sub-population, we have borrowed images from the NYC Department of Health, composed text describing syphilis and warning of its resurgence, identified the Southeast STD Clinic as a confidential and free syphilis testing site, and created business cards (to be distributed with condoms) and posters (to be posted in the 14 priority MSM venues).

To emphasize the STD Control Program’s involvement in and dedication to eradicating this disease, we would like to include on these business cards and posters the address and phone number of the Southeast STD Clinic, as well as the program’s STD Information Line phone number.

We, therefore, are asking for your assistance in getting these “Syphilis is Back! Get Tested!” business cards and posters cleared for distribution as soon as possible.