



Mississippi State Department of Health High School Screenings Summary

Background

In 2004, the STD/HIV Office began collaborating with high schools to screen for STDs including syphilis, HIV, chlamydia, and gonorrhea. As of December 31, 2010, 12 Mississippi high schools have participated in STD/HIV screening activities through these partnerships. Screening data is available for 2006 through 2010. A total of 1,038 students were screened with 114 (11%) positive for chlamydia. Three hundred seventy-four students (36%) screened were male and 664 (74%) were female. Among the males students screened, 29 (7.8%) were positive for chlamydia. Among the female students screened, 68 (12.8%) were positive for chlamydia. High schools located within counties of the Mississippi Delta have been more receptive to screening and have provided screening opportunities to students on several occasions throughout the past six years of collaboration.

In 2009, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) STD/HIV Office began collaboration with the Jackson Public School District (JPS), second largest school district in Mississippi, to address the need for STD/HIV related education and screening opportunities within its eight high schools. The collaboration included the STD/HIV Office staff providing presentations with STD/HIV statistics, education, and screening protocol to JPS administration, principals, and counselors. Based on the feedback, the JPS was convinced of the need for education and screening; however, was apprehensive until positive parental feedback was received.

Current Activities

The MSDH STD/HIV Office is currently disseminating materials to students, school administration and other staff, parents, and other members of high morbidity communities to demonstrate the need for STD/HIV education and screening opportunities. Materials include STD/HIV statistical fact sheets with state and county level data, STD/HIV Awareness Month Proclamation signed by the State Health Officer, and the Mississippi Legislature 2011 Regular Session House Bill 999 which was signed by the Governor on March 16, 2010 to make sex education mandatory in all public Mississippi high schools by June 30, 2012.

Future Plans

The MSDH STD/HIV Office is continuing plans to collaborate with the JPS to provide STD/HIV awareness and screening. Since the Governor has signed the House Bill 999, there is more leverage to openly discuss the need for STD/HIV education and screening. The STD/HIV Office is anticipating introducing STD/HIV screening services by fall 2011 in JPS schools and expand screening in other high schools within high morbidity areas.