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Dear Colleague,

You may recall that the Whitmarsh Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Clinic closed in June 2011. For decades, the clinic saw roughly 2,500 visits annually and provided confidential diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), counseling, testing, treatment and referrals.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) is working with providers to help people concerned about sexually transmitted disease and HIV find appropriate healthcare options in their communities. More patients also may turn to their primary care physicians, urgent care centers, and emergency rooms for help.

To better assist you and your staff, HEALTH has enclosed the following STD and HIV resources:

- 2010 CDC Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Treatment Summary Guidelines.
- Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for STD Guidance for Medical Providers in Rhode Island.
- Confidential Case Report Form for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (2011).
- “Find STD Services in Rhode Island,” a patient referral guide.
- Rhode Island STD and HIV Epidemiology Summary.

You can find these resources and more on the HEALTH website under the “topics” pages for [“Sexually Transmitted Diseases”](#) and [“HIV / AIDS.”](#) Smart phone users can also link directly to www.health.ri.gov/diseases/sexuallytransmitted/for/providers/ using the QR code below.

Before 2011, we were extremely effective in controlling the spread of STDs in Rhode Island. The number of gonorrhea cases decreased from 973 in 2003 to 291 in 2010—a decline of 70% and the lowest count in the state since 1962. Last year we saw 93% of primary and secondary syphilis cases treated within 14 days of specimen collection and 98% treated within 30 days. In 2010, state legislators passed the Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) Law so that healthcare providers may now prescribe and provide medications for sex partners.

But the closure of Whitmarsh has been associated with a 10% increase in STD incidence in 2011—mostly an increase in chlamydia.

Please review the enclosed materials and let us know how we can work together to reduce STD incidence—and eliminate native HIV transmission in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your commitment to patient care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Fine".

Michael Fine, MD
Director of Health

