



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

Date: September 21, 2026

Contact: Rick Rosen, MD, MPH, frosen@co.slo.ca.us, 805-781-5500

Rising HIV and Syphilis Cases: Increase Routine Testing

The County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health is observing a notable rise in HIV cases. Since January, 8 new HIV cases and fewer than five AIDS cases have been reported — already surpassing last year's HIV total.

Syphilis rates are also continuing to rise locally.

We are asking **all providers to include HIV and syphilis testing in routine STI screenings** and follow state guidance on opt-out screening practices.

Testing Expectations and CDPH Guidance

California Law on HIV Testing

California law streamlines HIV testing in medical settings: providers do not need written patient consent to order an HIV test (only to inform the patient and document a decline), and insurers are required to cover HIV testing in medical care settings regardless of the visit's primary diagnosis. See [HIV Testing in Health Care Settings – California Law](#) for the full statutory requirements.

Opt-out HIV/STI Testing

Providers are encouraged to use [opt-out screening](#) during routine care, urgent care visits, emergency department encounters, and other clinical settings. Opt-out testing streamlines case detection and reduces missed opportunities for diagnosis.

Recommended Screening Practices

- Follow [CDPH's California STI Screening Recommendations](#) for all sexually active adolescents and adults.
- In emergency departments, implement opt-out screening for HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis, per the CDPH [ED Implementation Guide](#) and the accompanying [Dear Colleague Letter](#).
- For lab confirmation, follow the CDC's [Recommended Laboratory HIV Testing Algorithm](#) for serum or plasma specimens.

Providers may also point patients to **TakeMeHome**, a program offering [free in-home STI testing kits](#), as an additional option for patients who may benefit from at-home testing.



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

PrEP and PEP Access in SLO County

HIV PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PrEP can be prescribed by any licensed provider. Common local prescribers include:

- Planned Parenthood
- The Center clinics
- Community Health Centers (CHC)
- Online PrEP providers (available upon request)

Individuals on PrEP still require routine HIV testing. Providers can consult the National Consultation Center for prescribing support or refer to the CDC's [Clinical Guidance for PrEP](#) for prescribing details.

HIV PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PEP is considered a medical emergency.

- Emergency Departments remain the primary PEP access point.
- Providers can consult the National Clinician Consultation Center for prescribing support on complex cases or refer to the CDC's [Clinical Guidance for PEP](#).

Mpox Vaccination Availability

In addition to HIV/STI testing needs, The Department of Public Health has a limited quantity of Jynneos (Mpox) vaccine available. Patients seeking vaccination are encouraged to schedule an appointment at Public Health clinics by calling 805-781-5500.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Other related resources:

1. [HIV Testing in Health Care Settings – California Law](#)
2. [Opt-Out Screening for STIs and HIV Job Aid](#)
3. [California Sexually Transmitted Infections \(STIs\) Screening Recommendations](#)
4. [Implementation Guide: Screening for HIV, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis in Emergency Departments](#)
5. [Dear Colleague Letter: Opt-Out ED Screening for HIV, HCV, and Syphilis](#)
6. [2018 Quick Reference Guide: Recommended Laboratory HIV Testing Algorithm for Serum or Plasma Specimens](#)
7. [CDC Clinical Guidance for PEP](#)
8. [CDC Clinical Guidance for PrEP](#)