



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Gina DeBlassie
Cabinet Secretary

New Mexico Department of Health

**Public Health Order
New Mexico Department of Health
Secretary Gina DeBlassie**

October 15, 2026

**Syphilis Screening in All Pregnant People
and Adults Ages 18 to 50 to Prevent Congenital Syphilis**

WHEREAS, syphilis passed from mother to child, known as congenital syphilis, presents a major public health threat because it can lead to serious birth defects, miscarriage, and infant death;

WHEREAS, congenital syphilis is preventable with timely testing and treatment of the pregnant person;

WHEREAS, over half of infants with congenital syphilis were born to people who did not receive any prenatal care. Therefore, it is important to make any health care encounter during pregnancy - including those in emergency departments, urgent care centers, jails, and maternal and child health programs - an opportunity to screen for syphilis;

WHEREAS, the number of reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis (the most infectious stages of the disease) and reported cases of congenital syphilis have increased steadily in the United States since 2013, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) ranked New Mexico as the state with the 2nd highest rates of congenital and primary/secondary syphilis in 2023 (the most recent year that CDC provided state rankings); ¹

WHEREAS, expanded testing and other public health strategies have helped reduce congenital syphilis in New Mexico over the past two years and therefore are critical to sustain progress. Despite recent decreases, New Mexico continues to have a higher rate of congenital syphilis than the nation as a whole. In 2024, the US congenital syphilis rate was 109.6 cases per 100,000 live births (a 216.8% increase from 2018),¹ while the New Mexico rate was significantly higher at 366.0 per 100,000 live births that year (a 743.3% increase from 2018);²

WHEREAS, the CDC and the US Preventive Services Task Force recommends syphilis screening for people who are at high risk for syphilis or live in areas with high rates of syphilis. Given high syphilis rates statewide across New Mexico, screening adults ages 18 – 50 is the best practice in all regions of the state;

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2023, the NM Department of Health issued a Public Health Order recognizing congenital syphilis as a condition of public health importance and advised medical practitioners on additional screening recommendations for both pregnant people and non-pregnant adults ages 18 – 50.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gina DeBlassie, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), in accordance with the authority vested in me pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 9-7-6(B)(5), do hereby declare that the rate of congenital syphilis in New Mexico constitutes a condition of public health importance as defined in NMSA 1978, Section 24-1-2(A) of the New Mexico Public Health Act that presents a public health threat that is identifiable on an individual or community level and can reasonably be expected to lead to adverse health effects in the community.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

All medical practitioners shall ensure the following testing upon consent of the patient:

- a. Adults aged 18 to 50 should be screened yearly, or more often as recommended based on individual risk or pregnancy status.
- b. Syphilis testing for all pregnant people in their first trimester (or initial prenatal visit).
- c. Syphilis testing for all pregnant people in their 3rd trimester (between 28-32 weeks gestational age).
- d. Syphilis testing for all pregnant people at delivery
- e. Syphilis testing for all pregnant people who present to an urgent care center or an emergency room if the patient has not received prior prenatal care.
- f. Syphilis testing for people with an intrauterine fetal demise at any gestational age.
- g. Syphilis testing for all pregnant people at correctional facilities, including prisons, jails, and juvenile detention centers, at the intervals and events ordered herein.

¹[STI Statistics Archive | STI Statistics | CDC](#)

²[New Mexico STD Program Summary of Surveillance Data: 2025](#)

THIS ORDER supersedes any previous order, proclamation, or directives to the extent they are in conflict. This Public Order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect until such time as it automatically expires one year from the date of issuance, or until such time as the NMDOH Cabinet Secretary rescinds it.

ATTEST:

THIS 24TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2026


Gina DeBlassie
Cabinet Secretary of the State of the
New Mexico Department of Health