

**Sexually Transmitted Infections—Expedited Partner Therapy for Chlamydia and
Gonorrhea
Proposed Regulation Text**

September 2015

.01 Purpose and Scope.

A. The purpose of Expedited Partner Therapy in Maryland is to:

- (1) Provide antibiotic therapy to any partner of a patient diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea without a personal physical assessment of the partner, and without having a previous provider-patient relationship with the partner;*
- (2) Contain and stop the further spread of the infections; and*
- (3) Reduce the likelihood of reinfection in the diagnosed patient.*

B. This chapter applies to the provision of Expedited Partner Therapy, as described in §A of this regulation, in public and private health care settings.

.02 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

- (1) "Antibiotic therapy" means the oral antibiotic drug regimens currently recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the treatment of chlamydia and gonorrhea through Expedited Partner Therapy.*
- (2) "Department" means the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.*
- (3) "Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)" means the prescribing or dispensing of antibiotic therapy to any partner of a patient diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea by certain health care providers without making a personal physical assessment of the partner, and without*

having a previous provider-patient relationship with the partner, in order to contain and stop the further spread of the infection and reduce the likelihood of reinfection in the diagnosed patient.

(4) "Health officer" means the health officer in each of the 23 counties and the Commissioner of Health in Baltimore City, or the duly designated representative of the health officer, or both.

(5) "Partner" means an individual with whom one has, or has had, oral, anal or vaginal sexual contact.

.03 Partners Eligible for EPT.

Partners eligible for EPT are:

(A) Any partner within 60 calendar days of the patient's diagnosis; or

(B) The most recent partner of a patient if the patient has not had sex in the 60 days prior to diagnosis.

.04 Health Care Providers Authorized to Prescribe and Dispense EPT.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and in accordance with their current scope of practice, EPT may be prescribed or dispensed by the following health care providers:

A. A physician licensed under Health Occupations Article, Title 14, Annotated Code of Maryland;

B. An advanced practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority licensed under Health Occupations Article, Title 8, acting in accordance with § 8-508 of the Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland;

C. An authorized physician assistant licensed under Health Occupations Article, Title 15, Annotated Code of Maryland, acting in accordance with § 15-302.2 of the Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; and

D. A registered nurse employed by a local health department who complies with:

(1) The formulary developed and approved under § 3-403(b) of the Health General Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; and

(2) The requirements established under § 8-512 of the Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

.05 Prescribing and Dispensing EPT Medications.

A. Antibiotic therapy prescribed or dispensed for EPT shall be in accordance with the most current Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

B. Prescribing.

(1) A separate prescription shall be issued for each partner;

(2) The designation “EPT” or “Expedited Partner Therapy” shall be included on the face of the prescription for each prescription issued;

(3) If the partner’s name is known, the prescription shall be issued in the partner’s name;

(4) If the partner’s name is unknown, the written designation “EPT” or “Expedited Partner Therapy” shall be sufficient for the pharmacist to fill the prescription; and

(5) An EPT prescription shall not be refilled.

C. Dispensing. The medication label shall:

(1) Include the designation “EPT” or “Expedited Partner Therapy”; and

(2) Comply with § 12-505 of the Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

.06 Counseling and Educational Information Requirements.

A. A health care provider prescribing or dispensing EPT to a patient shall:

(1) Counsel the patient to encourage each partner to seek a personal physical assessment; and

(2) Provide the patient with educational information for each partner, in accordance with §C of this regulation.

B. A pharmacist dispensing EPT shall provide educational information for each partner, in accordance with §C of this regulation.

C. The educational information, that is available or comparable to that available on the Department's website, shall include advice for the partner to seek a medical evaluation, information about chlamydia and gonorrhea, medication instructions, warnings about adverse drug or allergic reactions, and advice to abstain from sexual activity as required during treatment.

.07 Documenting EPT in a Medical Chart.

A. A health care provider prescribing or dispensing EPT shall document the provision of EPT in the patient's chart.

B. Documentation shall include the:

(1) Number of EPT prescriptions or medications provided to the patient for each partner; and

(2) Medication and dosage being provided to the patient for each partner.

.08 Reporting of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea by Health Care Providers.

A. This chapter shall not affect the obligation of a health care provider to report to a health officer cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea and the treatment provided to those cases in accordance with COMAR 10.06.01.04.

B. When reporting a case of chlamydia or gonorrhea for which EPT was prescribed or dispensed, health care providers shall report the number of partners for whom:

- (1) Prescriptions were provided; and*
- (2) Medications were dispensed.*

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