



NEWS

From the Illinois Senate

State Senator Dave Koehler

For immediate release

August 25, 2009

Further information:

Ian Watts 217.782.0591

Expedited Partner Therapy Bill Becomes Law

PEORIA, IL—State Sen. David Koehler's (D-Peoria) expedited partner therapy bill was signed into law by the governor yesterday.

The new law, based on Senate Bill 212, is designed to slow the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. It allows physicians to treat the sexual partners of persons with gonorrhea or Chlamydia without physically examining them. Both of these easily spread diseases are treated with antibiotics.

“Sexually transmitted diseases are dangerous, uncomfortable and embarrassing,” said Koehler. “Although our first goal must be encouraging safe sexual practices or abstinence, we also need to act to stop the spread of these illnesses. I believe expedited partner therapy is a useful tool for health professionals who are fighting highly communicable diseases.”

Advocates of expedited partner therapy point out that people are often afraid to visit the doctor about sexually transmitted diseases when they do not display symptoms. The social stigma attached to these sicknesses keeps them away. Unfortunately, a person who does not display symptoms may still be infected and even spread the illness to others. Infection with another sexually transmitted disease also can facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS, another major reason health experts are trying innovative techniques like expedited partners therapy to fight the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

“Although we want to stop the spread of all infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS must be a high priority because of its high mortality rates,” Koehler said. “We must arm our health care professionals with every tool possible to stop the spread of AIDS.”

The AIDS foundation of Chicago also argues that sexually transmitted diseases disproportionately affect minority communities. They claim gonorrhea rates in the Illinois African American community are 28 times higher than in the white community, a clear problem.

###