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**Professional Title, Organization:** Bi-County Health Officer, Yuba County and Sutter County

**CHIP Title:** Addressing the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) Epidemic in Yuba County

**Project Description:**

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have increased exponentially in the past several years nationally and statewide. Yuba County as a small rural county in northern California has one of the highest rates of congenital syphilis with a crude rate of greater than 112.9 congenital syphilis cases per 100,000 live births. From 2017 to 2022, the rate of syphilis increased from 17 to 84.1 cases per 100,000.

In California, incarcerated individuals are among the individuals most impacted by STDs. This CHIP project aimed to implement an STDs opt-out testing program for all inmates coming into the Yuba County Jail – a facility with an average jail population in the 180s during the COVID-19 pandemic but is now back to its pre-pandemic level of mid-300s to low 400s. The STDs opt-out testing program was paired with public health staffing of part-time social workers and a nurse to provide social services linkages and medical/behavioral health linkages, respectively.

The planning and implementation of this CHIP project as a public health officer during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was extremely difficult. This was made more challenging when the proposal to contract with WellPath as the jail medical provider to provide the STDs opt-out testing and treatment was denied by the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH) because WellPath is a for-profit company. Through the project lead's persistence in providing justification for why WellPath was chosen, CDPH ultimately approved the contract with WellPath and the project successfully started in September 2022.

**Key Findings and Lessons Learned:**

- Successful collaboration between Yuba County Jail, WellPath, and Yuba County Public Health on STDs Opt-Out testing, treatment, and linkages to care prior to release.
- Implemented a simple survey to allow Yuba County Jail and WellPath to submit monthly data regarding total number of inmates agreeing to syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea testing and how many who tested positive were successfully treated.
- Provided wrap-around linkages to care to those inmates who elected to participate in the STDs Opt-Out Program
- Received a National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) 2023 Promising Practice Award

**Next Steps:**

- Continue program at least until STDs Collaborative Grant funding ends in June 2024. There is strong possibility that STDs grant funding will be continued by CDPH.
- Evaluate CalAIM Justice-Involved Initiative set to start in July 2024.