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Dear Colleague:

Over the last decade, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis have continued to rise in Los Angeles County (LAC) becoming an urgent public health priority locally. In order to address the continued rise in STIs, a three-pronged approach involving STI screening, treatment, and prevention is needed, and recommendations are enclosed with this letter.

This letter is to inform healthcare providers of a new biomedical prevention tool utilizing doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP) to prevent STIs. In a randomized controlled trial published in 2023, a single oral dose of doxycycline 200mg taken within 72 hours of condomless sex significantly reduced the acquisition of bacterial STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis) by 65% in populations of men who have sex with men as well as transgender women. When broken out by disease, DoxyPEP reduced syphilis infections by 87%, chlamydia infections by 88%, and gonorrhea infections by 55%.

Given these impressive findings, LAC Department of Public Health recommends that medical providers prescribe DoxyPEP to 1) gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and 2) transgender women (TGW) who had 1 bacterial STI in the past 12 months.

A common concern among providers who first learn about DoxyPEP is the potential for individual or population level antimicrobial resistance. The DoxyPEP Frequently Asked Questions (or FAQ) handout in this toolkit summarizes current data regarding this concern. Based on the current evidence, the benefits of DoxyPEP outweigh antimicrobial resistance concerns, particularly for persons at high risk of a bacterial STI. Given its high efficacy, DoxyPEP may reduce the subsequent need for other antibiotics for STI treatment for these patients and their sexual partners.

The DoxyPEP Action Kit includes both clinical tools for your practice and patient-facing educational materials. DoxyPEP has a significant potential to reduce STI rates in our community and patients are increasingly interested in this intervention. We urge you to learn about this new biomedical tool, and we count on you to identify and prescribe DoxyPEP to the patients who would benefit from this highly effective STI prevention option.

Sincerely,

Mario J. Pérez, Director
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Sonali Kulkarni, Medical Director
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