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Expedited Partner Therapy for Treatment of Sexually
Transmitted Infections (STIs)
Senate Bill 306 (Pan, Chapter 486, Statutes of 2021)
Fact Sheet

Background

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 306](#) (Pan, Chapter 486, Statutes of 2021) became law effective January 1, 2022. SB 306 strengthens state law allowing expedited partner therapy (EPT) by naming the practice, referencing U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, and providing additional guidelines and liability protections for prescribers and pharmacists. EPT is an effective and important strategy to reduce STI re-infection, ensure treatment of partners, and prevent ongoing transmission.

Key Provisions of SB 306

Definition of Expedited Partner Therapy

SB 306 names the practice of a specified health care provider who diagnoses sexually transmitted chlamydia, gonorrhea, or another sexually transmitted infection (STI) and prescribes, dispenses, furnishes, or otherwise provides prescription antibiotic drugs to that patient's sexual partner or partners without examination of the sexual partner(s) as "Expedited Partner Therapy." ([California Health and Safety Code \(HSC\) Section 120582\(a\).](#))

Reference to CDC Guidelines

Previously, EPT could be used for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and any other STI as determined by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). SB 306 now allows EPT use for any STI as recommended in the most recent [CDC guidelines for the prevention or treatment of sexually transmitted diseases](#). ([HSC 120582\(a\)](#), (b).)

Use of a Standing Order

Physicians and Surgeons

SB 306 allows a physician and surgeon who diagnoses an STI to prescribe, dispense, furnish, or otherwise provide EPT, including through a standing order.



Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse-Midwives, and Physician Assistants

The law allows a nurse practitioner (NP) and a certified nurse-midwife (CNM) to include EPT in their practice. If an NP or CNM has an active furnishing certificate,¹ they may dispense, furnish, or otherwise provide, including through a standing order, prescription antibiotic drugs to the sexual partner(s) of a patient with a diagnosed STI consistent with the most recent CDC guidelines, without examining the patient's sexual partner(s). ([HSC 120582\(a\)](#), (b).) However, according to the Board of Registered Nursing, an NP or CNM may **not** write a standing order under which another health care provider (such as a Registered Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, or Medical Assistant) can issue EPT.

The law also allows a physician assistant (PA) to include EPT in their practice by dispensing, furnishing, or otherwise providing, including through a standing order, prescription antibiotic drugs to the sexual partner(s) of a patient with a diagnosed STI consistent with the most recent CDC guidelines, without examining the patient's sexual partner(s). ([HSC 120582\(a\)](#), (b).) However, according to the California PA Board, in order for a PA to utilize EPT, the practice agreement between the PA and a supervising physician must specify that the PA may provide drugs in accordance with the requirements of EPT. The PA is also subject to the requirements for supervision and training specified in Business and Professions Code ([BPC 3502.1\(c\) and \(e\)](#)). When these conditions are met, a PA may write a standing order for EPT under which another licensed health care provider such as a Registered Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, or Medical Assistant can issue EPT.

Prescription Labeling and Fulfillment Guidelines

SB 306 requires a health care provider to write "Expedited Partner Therapy" or "EPT" on a prescription if they do not have patient's sexual partner(s) name(s).

SB 306 also allows pharmacists to dispense a drug prescribed pursuant to [HSC 120582](#) and label the drug without the name of an individual for whom the drug is intended if the prescription includes the words "expedited partner therapy" or the letters "EPT." ([BPC 4076\(f\)](#).)

Liability Protections

Health care providers will not be liable in a medical malpractice action or professional disciplinary action if their use of EPT is in compliance with [HSC 120582](#), except in cases of intentional misconduct, gross negligence, or wanton or reckless activity. ([HSC 120582\(d\)](#).)

Pharmacists who prescribe, dispense, furnish, or otherwise render EPT, as authorized in [BPC 4076\(f\)](#), shall not be liable in, and shall not be subject to, a civil, criminal, or

¹ In order to furnish/prescribe drugs in California, a CNM or NP must have a furnishing number. For more information on how CNMs and NPs can apply for a furnishing number, visit the California Board of Registered Nursing website (<https://www.rn.ca.gov/applicants/ad-pract.shtml>) or see Resources (pg. 3).

administrative action, sanction, or penalty for rendering EPT, if the use of EPT is in compliance with BPC 4076, except in cases of intentional misconduct, gross negligence, or wanton or reckless activity. ([BPC 4076\(g\).](#))

Pharmacist Consultation

Pharmacists who provide EPT must provide written notification that describes the right of an individual who receives EPT to consult with a pharmacist about the medication dispensed and information regarding possible drug interactions. ([BPC 4076\(h\).](#))

Resources

CDC Guidelines

[CDC Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines, 2021](#)

[Expedited Partner Therapy](#)

CDPH Guidelines

[Expedited Partner Therapy \(EPT\) for STIs – What is EPT and Why Should I Prescribe It?](#)

[CDPH STD Clinical Guidelines and Tools](#)

[California STI Treatment Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents](#)

[California STI Screening Recommendations](#)

[Taking a Comprehensive Sexual History: Why it Matter and What is Needed](#)

CDPH and Essential Access Health

[Patient-Delivered Partner Therapy: A Counseling Guide for Providers](#)

[Patient and Partner Education Materials for PDPT in Multiple Languages](#)

Department of Consumer Affairs, Board of Registered Nursing

[CNM Criteria for Furnishing Number Utilization \(ca.gov\)](#)

[NP Criteria for Furnishing Number Utilization by Nurse Practitioners \(ca.gov\)](#)

Department of Health Care Services Guidelines for Medi-Cal and Family Planning Access, Care, and Treatment (Family PACT) Program

[Medi-Cal Family Planning Benefit Manual](#)

[Medi-Cal Preventative Services Manual](#)

[Medi-Cal Rx Contract Drugs List](#)

[Family PACT Family Planning-Related Services Benefits Manual](#)

[Family PACT Pharmacy Formulary](#)

[Family PACT Onsite Dispensing Price Guide](#)

Physician Assistant Board of California

[Frequently Asked Questions for Physician Assistant Applicants](#)

[Senate Bill 697 \(Chapter 707, Statutes of 2018\) Frequently Asked Questions](#)