

July 25, 2024

Salt Lake County Council
2001 S. State St. #N2-200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Re: Consideration of a Fee Waiver for STI Testing and Treatment

Dear Councilmembers:

For many years, Salt Lake County residents have relied on the STD clinic as a trusted community resource for testing, diagnosing, and treating sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The clinic continues to collaborate with the HIV/STD Prevention team to investigate, test, and treat STI cases. Roughly 8,000 referrals are investigated and managed by the HIV/STD Prevention team each year, and the clinic provides roughly 16,000 services.

The STD clinic and the HIV/STD Prevention team are responsible for controlling and managing newly emerging STIs and outbreaks. Their work demonstrates their skill and flexibility in dealing with new STIs such as during the Mpox outbreak in 2022. To date, they have increased their efforts to mitigate the current syphilis outbreak nationally through outreach testing events and partner services. To combat the spread of STIs, they not only diagnose and treat infected individuals, but they also look for partners to provide testing and treatment. Partners can continue to transfer infections if they are not tested and treated. If the outbreaks are not handled properly and promptly, they can spread and cause additional cases.

Testing and treatment related costs can lead to reluctance or refusal of partners and high-risk contacts to undergo important testing and treatment. The cost serves as a barrier that impedes the success of partner services and may contribute to the spread of STIs in the community.

To help reduce the transmission of STIs in Salt Lake County, the HIV/STD Prevention team and the STD clinic requests the Salt Lake County Council consider and approve the STD clinic's waiver of up to \$10,000 in administrative and testing fees each year.

The waiver would be limited to individuals who are suspected or confirmed to have an STI, and their contacts, who cannot afford testing and/or treatment and those who participate in outreach events. This is a means of encouraging affected individuals and their contacts to get tested and treated as soon as feasible to prevent the spread of STIs and protect the community's sexual health. Those at high risk will not receive the necessary tests and treatment if expenses cannot be waived on occasion. As a result, the infections may spread even further.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Respectfully,



Dorothy Adams, MPA, LEHS
Executive Director

Kelly Colopy
Human Services Director

Digitally signed by Kelly Colopy
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Erin Litvack
Mayor or Designee

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