

# News...

*...from the Illinois House of Representatives*

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## **Feigenholtz Calls for Quick Action on Legislation to Fight Skyrocketing STD Rates in Illinois**

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago) is asking for swift action on her legislation to reduce the growing rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by allowing physicians to provide antibiotics to the partners of people with an STD.

“We cannot afford to drag our feet when it comes to public health and preventing diseases,” Feigenholtz said. “The time to act on STD and HIV prevention across Illinois is now. We are making great progress in the fight against sexually transmitted diseases, but we can and must do more. I am asking the Senate to act quickly to send this important piece of legislation to the governor so it can become law.”

Senate Bill 212 aims to combat the growing epidemic of STDs by improving availability and access of vital antibiotics to Illinoisans. Specifically, SB 212 allows health care professionals to provide medicine to the partner of someone who has been diagnosed with an STD as a means to quickly treat or prevent the spread of any diseases. A doctor can prescribe medications to partners without physically examining the partner.

According to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, over 55,000 cases of Chlamydia and over 20,000 cases of gonorrhea were reported in Illinois in 2007. Chlamydia cases have increased 90 percent from 1997-2007. Additionally, studies funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that expedited partner therapy cut STD re-infection rates by 20 to 46 percent. This bill is modeled after laws in 15 other states.

“Illinois must be leading the charge on public health matters like this, not trailing behind so many other states,” Feigenholtz said. “This has the real potential to treat current STDs and prevent future ones. By passing this legislation, we are making tremendous progress in caring for and reducing diseases.”

Senate Bill 212 passed the House 111-4 and now heads back to the Senate for concurrence before it can be sent to governor to become law.

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