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RivCo Syphilis collaborative to hold second meeting June 26 in Palm Desert

The Riverside County Syphilis Community Collaborative will meet June 26 in Palm Desert to continue its discussion about the surge of syphilis cases in the region, particularly in the Coachella Valley.

The meeting starts at 1:30 p.m. at the UC Riverside Palm Desert Campus, 75080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Building B.

"We couldn't have asked for a better first meeting," said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, public health officer for the county. "There were great ideas, great participation and solid discussion. I look forward to start turning those ideas into solutions to our high rates of syphilis in this second meeting."

The spread of syphilis has been a growing concern nationally and throughout California for several years. In Riverside County, the rate is about 12 cases per 100,000 population, according to the latest figures. However, the rate for the Coachella Valley is 32 per 100,000, and in Palm Springs that figure is well over 100 cases per 100,000.

"I'm glad that partnering agencies from the community are continuing efforts to stop the spike in syphilis rates," said Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. "Everyone

participated with enthusiasm and thoughtful dialogue and brought forward suggestions that we will pursue.”

The collaborative met for the first time May 15 in Palm Springs and county health officials heard from various residents, representatives from different non-profit organizations and other community groups. The collaborative meetings are part of Riverside University Health System-Public Health’s “Spotlight on Syphilis (S.O.S.)” campaign to bring attention to the ongoing spike in cases. Future community forums will take place throughout Riverside County.

By sharing information and ideas, health officials hope they can come up with strategies and goals that are achievable.

For more information, go to www.rivcoph.org