

*The State Journal-Register* (Springfield, IL)

March 12, 2008 Wednesday

### **STD legislation falls short with Senate Panel**

*By: Adriana Colindres*

Legislation intended to help people who have sexually transmitted diseases failed to draw enough support Tuesday from an Illinois Senate panel, and the lawmaker behind the idea says he is dropping it for now.

Senate Bill 2150 would implement a practice called "expedited partner therapy," which means treating the infected partner of someone with an STD even when the partner has not been diagnosed through a medical exam. In its present form, the bill targets people with either chlamydia or gonorrhea.

John Peller of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago told members of the Senate Public Health Committee that one reason for the STD problem is that "only about half of partners of individuals diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases get treatment."

Peller called expedited partner therapy the "second-choice treatment" for health-care providers.

"If the provider feels the partner is unable or unlikely to come in for treatment, the provider will either write a prescription or give medications to the patient to give to the partner," Peller said.

The antibiotics are single-dose and "extremely safe," he said, adding that the legislation is based on recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Some lawmakers said too many questions surround the legislation.

"Essentially it allows a situation where we hand out prescriptions for antibiotics with no real knowledge as to where they're going, how they're going to be used," said Sen. Christine Radogno, R-Lemont.

Also unclear is who would be liable if people have a bad reaction to a drug prescribed by a physician who never examined them, Radogno said.

Once it became clear the measure wouldn't get the six votes it needed to advance out of the Public Health Committee, its sponsor, Democratic Sen. David Koehler of Peoria, withdrew the bill from consideration. Koehler said he would wait until next year to push the legislation again.