



Aboriginal Medical Services  
Alliance Northern Territory  
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**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
**02 July 2025**

**AMSANT welcomes NT Government action on syphilis outbreak.**

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) welcomes the NT Government's decision to commission a dedicated Incident Management Team (IMT) to respond to the ongoing syphilis outbreak — a long overdue but critical step in addressing this public health issue.

Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection that can be difficult to detect without a test. Known as “the great imitator,” its symptoms are often confused with other health conditions — or may disappear quickly, even though the infection remains. Without regular screening, it's easy for people to have syphilis without realising they're unwell.

“Syphilis is a serious public health issue that has quietly worsened for more than a decade,” said Barbara Molanus, Sexual Health Coordinator at AMSANT.

“The decision to commission an IMT is a step in the right direction that can bring a renewed focus to community-wide testing.

“Testing is key to identifying cases early. By starting treatment straight away and treating partners, we can prevent further transmission and the potentially devastating effects of untreated syphilis on babies and people who go on to develop tertiary syphilis.”

Since 2013, syphilis cases have steadily increased across the Territory.

Ms Molanus said Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHS) have been on the frontline of the response for more than 12 years, delivering testing, treatment, education and contact tracing in challenging and under-resourced settings.

“The good news is that our sector has been leading the way in managing this outbreak — and we are now in the strongest position to advise government on what works,” she said.

“Our member services bring cultural knowledge, clinical expertise and trusted relationships with community — and we stand ready to guide this next phase of the response.”

AMSANT looks forward to working in partnership with the NT Government to ensure this response is community-led, evidence-based, and backed by the resources needed to stop the spread.

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