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Syphilis scare prompts call to halt US porn shoots

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Reports of several cases of syphilis among porn actors in California has prompted a trade group to call for a temporary halt to shooting in the lucrative US adult film industry.

The Free Speech Coalition, which brings together porn film producers, has advocated a "temporary moratorium on production until the risk to performers in the industry has been properly assessed and all performers have been tested."

Once treated with antibiotics, infected actors will be able to resume work within 10 days, it added in a statement on its website, saying that testing was ongoing.

Last week, health officials in Los Angeles County announced they were investigating an increase in syphilis cases in the porn industry -- at least five in the previous week.

On Tuesday, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), which wants mandatory condom use by porn actors, said "reliable sources" suggest there could be as many as nine industry-related syphilis cases, "a number that will likely grow."

AHF, active in the fight against AIDS, is hoping California voters will approve a proposal on November 6 that would require the use of condoms during porn film shoots. The city of Los Angeles adopted such language in January.

The X-rated movie industry temporarily halted filming last year after an actor tested positive for HIV.

According to Film LA, about five percent of the 45,500 film shoots authorized annually in the city are for porn films.

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