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San Joaquin County Public Health Services Promotes Awareness of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Key Recommendations: Screening, Testing, Treatment and Prevention

STOCKTON, CA (April 11, 2012) – April is national Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month. This annual observance calls attention to the health impacts of sexually transmitted diseases and promotes STD testing. In San Joaquin County, several thousand cases of sexually transmitted diseases are diagnosed each year. In 2010 there were over 3700 chlamydia infections and over 700 gonorrhea infections in the County, with the vast majority of these cases being diagnosed in young people ages 15-24. In addition, the County has seen a recent rise in syphilis cases.

“People need to be aware of what they can do to decrease their risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease,” said Dr. Karen Furst, San Joaquin County Health Officer. Many STDs are treatable and curable. STD screening, early diagnosis and treatment are vital to prevent serious health consequences and increased spread of the disease. Because STDs often have no symptoms in the early stages, many individuals do not find out they are infected unless they are screened and tested. If these infections remain undiagnosed, people run the risk of passing the STDs on to others and developing serious health complications.

Dr. Furst notes that treating STDs, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, promptly is important in order to prevent complications including infertility. In addition, STDs can increase the risk that an individual will contract HIV or spread HIV to a partner. As troubling as these risks are, it is important to know that reducing risk behaviors can prevent STD and HIV infections. Examples of risk reduction behaviors include abstinence, being in a monogamous relationship, and using condoms. Parents can also help reduce teens’ risk by talking with them about STD prevention.

Public Health Services (PHS) conducts HIV and STD outreach and education to community organizations and medical providers, and keeps track of STD rates and trends in San Joaquin County. PHS also has STD Clinic services in Stockton and conducts testing programs in high-risk settings such as Juvenile Hall. PHS STD staff assists individuals who have been diagnosed with STDs to communicate these results with their partners so that affected partners may also receive treatment.

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The Public Health Services STD Clinic is located at 1601 E. Hazelton Avenue in Stockton. For clinic hours, please visit http://www.sjcphs.org/Clinic/Clinic_Locations_and_Hours.aspx or call (209) 468-3830.

In addition to the services provided by PHS, STD testing is available from many primary care providers, and at other locations throughout the County. To find a convenient location to get tested, go to www.findstdtest.org.

More information on specific STDs is available at these websites:

California Department of Public Health: www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/default.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/std/HealthComm/fact_sheets.htm .

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Attached: Background Data Sheets