



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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California Sees Increase in Sexually Transmitted Diseases

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and state health officer, says the number of reportable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in California increased in 2013 according to data made public today.

“Sexually transmitted diseases can cause major health problems for people over time,” said Dr. Chapman. “This increase is concerning, particularly because STDs are preventable.”

The data show that almost 168,000 cases of chlamydia, over 38,000 cases of gonorrhea, over 3,500 cases of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis, almost 2,900 cases of early latent syphilis, and over 3,600 cases of late latent syphilis were reported in 2013, for a total of 216,000 reportable cases of STDs.

In 2013, the rates of gonorrhea and P&S syphilis (the most infectious stages) increased substantially compared to 2012. In 2013, the gonorrhea rate increased 13 percent to 100.4 per 100,000 population, and the P&S syphilis rate increased 18 percent to 9.3 per 100,000 population. In contrast, in 2013 the rate of chlamydia cases decreased slightly for the first time in almost two decades, to 439.5 per 100,000 population. Chlamydia is the most commonly reported disease in California.

STD rates continue to be highest in young people 15-24 years of age, especially for females, with over 66 percent of female chlamydia cases and over 54 percent of female gonorrhea cases being in this narrow age group. Young women are the most vulnerable to infertility and other long-term reproductive health problems caused by STDs.

“Any sexually active person can get an STD through unprotected sex,” said Chapman. “They should talk with their health care provider and ask if testing for STDs is appropriate.” An online directory of test sites is available at findstdtest.org. Many clinics offer free tests.

Chapman pointed out that in addition to getting tested regularly, individuals can reduce their risk by using condoms, reducing their number of partners, being in a monogamous relationship or practicing abstinence.

(more)

Profound racial disparities persist. In 2013, the African-American gonorrhea rate of 351.1 per 100,000 was 6.2 times the non-Hispanic white rate of 56.9 per 100,000.

CDPH has been working to address health disparities in STDs. The STD Control Branch has identified census tracts with high numbers of gonorrhea cases and significant racial disparities and has focused interventions in these areas. In addition, the Branch is collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control and California's Department of Education to reduce the high rates of STDs among youth through supporting comprehensive sex education, improving access to sexual health services, and helping schools build supportive environments for all youth, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

CDPH trains medical providers to assure that they are assessing their patients' risk for STDs, screening appropriately, and using the most effective treatments. CDPH also works closely with local health jurisdictions to coordinate disease prevention and control efforts statewide, including helping identify infected individuals and assuring that they and their partners get treated.

[The data described in this news release](#) and [more information about STDs](#) are available on CDPH's website.

www.cdph.ca.gov

