



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 8, 2019

PH19-025

**CONTACT:** Corey Egel | 916.440.7259 | [CDPHpress@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:CDPHpress@cdph.ca.gov)

## **Reported Sexually Transmitted Diseases Reach Epidemic levels in California**

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today released [final data](#) on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in California in 2018. According to the data, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia cases are continuing to increase throughout California and are at the highest levels in 30 years.

Particularly concerning, the number of congenital syphilis cases was 14% higher than the previous year and nearly 900% higher than in 2012. Congenital syphilis can be fatal to infants: there were 22 stillbirths or neonatal deaths in 2018.

STDs can cause a number of serious health problems. If left untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease and lead to infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain. Syphilis can cause permanent loss of vision, hearing and other neurologic problems.

The highest rates of STDs are among young individuals ages 15-24.

“STDs are preventable by practicing safe-sex, and many can be cured with antibiotics,” said Acting State Public Health Officer Dr. Charity Dean. “[Regular testing](#) and treatment are essential prevention strategies, even for people who have no symptoms. Most people infected with an STD do not know it.”

CDPH is collaborating with local health departments and organizations throughout the state to coordinate efforts to control STDs, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV).

The 2019-2020 state budget includes increases in funds to help address the rise in STDs, including:

- \$40 million over four years to enhance the capacity of local health departments to identify, monitor and respond to communicable diseases.

- \$5 million per year for STD prevention and control by local health departments and community based organizations.
- \$5 million per year for HIV prevention and control by local health departments and community based organizations.
- \$5 million per year for Hepatitis C prevention and control by local health departments and community based organizations.
- \$2 million per year to enhance local health department capacity for STD prevention and control.

For more information, visit [the CDPH Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Branch](#).

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)