



**National Coalition
of STD Directors**



CHLAMYDIA, GONORRHEA & SYPHILIS: STDs ON THE RISE

What are sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are passed from person to person through sexual activity. These infections can be bacterial, viral or parasitic. While many STDs can be cured or treated with medication, the consequences of untreated STDs can include: infertility, pregnancy complications, cervical cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease, birth defects, and an up to 5-fold increased risk of HIV transmission.

A public health crisis

The U.S. has the highest rate of STDs in the industrialized world, with approximately twenty million new cases of STDs each year. This will cost the healthcare system \$16 billion dollars. These rates are increasing in every demographic across the nation and can deeply affect people's lives.

STDs in the U.S. are at the highest levels ever recorded and continue to increase yearly



**Syphilis
increased**

196%



**Chlamydia
increased**

95%



**Gonorrhea
increased**

65%



**Congenital Syphilis
increased**

122%

cases, between 2003 and 2017

Reasons for concern: The cost of STDs in the U.S.

Health outcomes

STDs can be life threatening. If untreated, STDs can lead to serious health outcomes including pelvic inflammatory diseases, infertility, and event death. Congenital syphilis (mother-child) leads to infant death or unviability in up to 40% of cases and is on the rise. STDs also increase the chances of acquiring incurable STDs like HIV.

Hefty price tag

STD prevention avoids STD costs. It's estimated that STDs alone burden the health care system with \$16 billion in health care costs.



Syphilis

Syphilis is an STD that is spread during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. If left untreated syphilis can cause serious health problems, and if left untreated in a pregnant woman, the infection can be transmitted from the mother to the unborn baby (congenital syphilis). Without adequate treatment syphilis can spread to the brain and nervous system (neurosyphilis) and, in some cases, lead to death.

Syphilis in the U.S.

The United States is currently seeing high and climbing rates of primary and secondary syphilis. The Western U.S. is seeing highest rates of primary and secondary syphilis.

Congenital Syphilis

Congenital syphilis is when a pregnant mother who has syphilis spreads the disease through the placenta to her unborn infant.

Once nearly eradicated, congenital syphilis is on the rise. Up to 40% of congenital syphilis cases may result in still birth or infant death, and others may result in birth defects.

196%

**Increase in
syphilis cases**

cases, since 2003

206%

**Increase in cases of
women with syphilis**

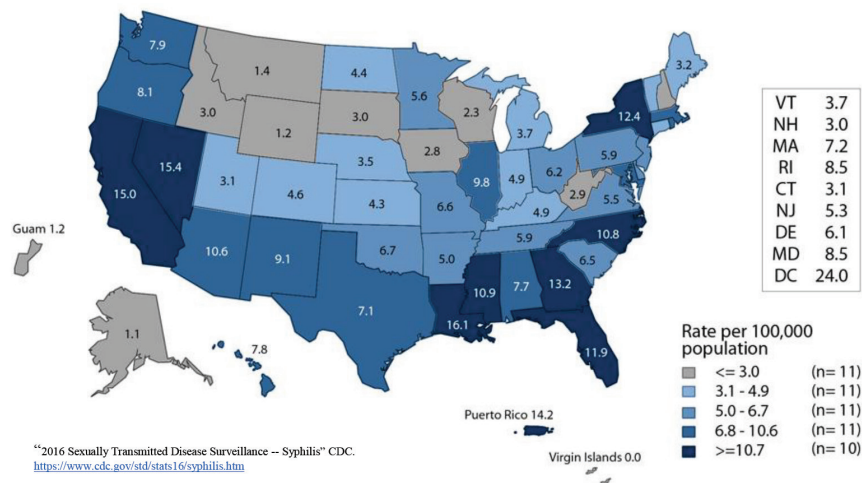
since 2003

\$29.6

Million¹

estimated amount that syphilis
will cost the health care system

Rates of reported primary and secondary syphilis by state (2016)



Reasons for concern

Increases of syphilis among women are of particular concern because congenital syphilis rates increase as the rate of primary and secondary syphilis increases among women of child bearing age.

Congenital syphilis can cause a baby to be born too soon, too small or even lead to a still birth. If a baby is born with syphilis, the baby could become blind or deaf or have problems with teeth, bones and joints. Congenital syphilis results in infant death 40% of the time

Syphilis can lead to long-term health concerns if left untreated, including brain or eye damage. Therefore, the increasing rates of syphilis are alarming and have real health care impacts for many men and women in the United States.

¹Owusu-Edusei K, et al. *The estimated direct medical cost of selected sexually transmitted infections in the United States*, 2008. Sex Transm Dis 2013; 40(3): pp. 197-201.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a common infection that is found in the genitals, rectum, in throat. Gonorrhea is spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. If left untreated in a pregnant woman, gonorrhea can be passed from mother to child.

Gonorrhea in the U.S.

The United States has seen a dramatic rise in gonorrhea. The South is seeing the most cases of gonorrhea, however increases have been observed nationwide.

65%

**Increase in
gonorrhea
cases**

since 2003

98%

**Increase in the
West**

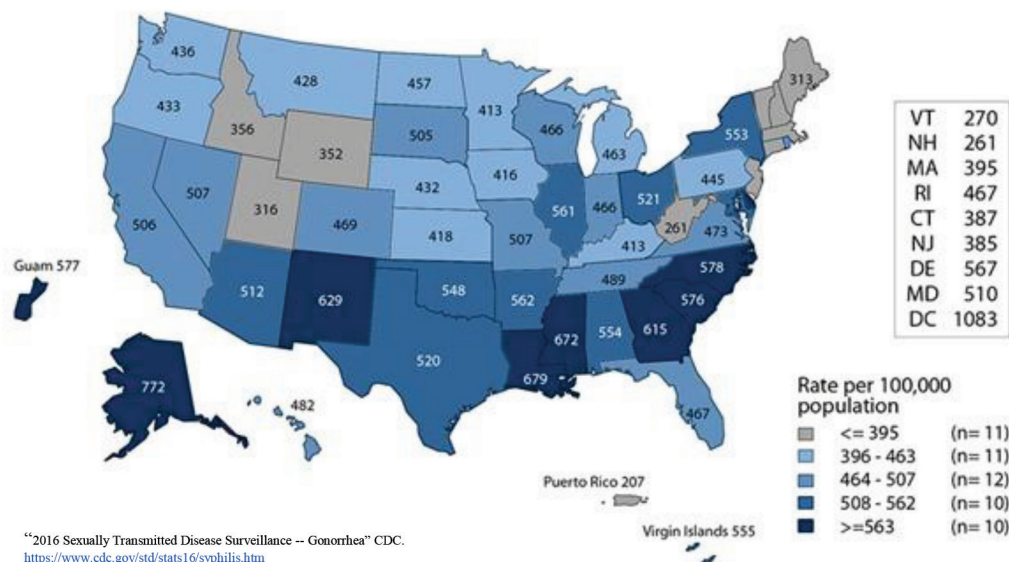
since 2003

\$248.7

Million¹

estimated amount that gonorrhea
will cost the health care system

Rates of reported gonorrhea cases by state (2016)



Reasons for concern

Gonorrhea can cause lifetime effects for men and women. Women can experience pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), long term infertility, and possible deadly ectopic pregnancies. The infection in men can cause a painful condition in the testicle area and can lead to infertility. In some cases, gonorrhea can spread to the blood or joints and become life-threatening.

Untreated gonorrhea also increases an individual's chance of getting or giving HIV.

Gonorrhea is becoming resistant to antibiotics. England recently saw its first case of Super-Resistant Gonorrhea. This will have financial and life-time consequences.

¹Owusu-Edusei K, et al. *The estimated direct medical cost of selected sexually transmitted infections in the United States*, 2008. Sex Transm Dis 2013; 40(3): pp. 197-201.



Chlamydia

Chlamydia is spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. If left untreated, chlamydia can cause serious damage to a woman's reproductive health system including pelvic inflammatory disease and the inability to get pregnant.

Chlamydia in the U.S.

The United States has seen a dramatic increase in chlamydia since 2003 and rates continue to rise by the year.

95%

**Increase in
chlamydia
cases**

since 2003

204%

**Increase in
cases of men
with chlamydia**

between 2003 and 2016

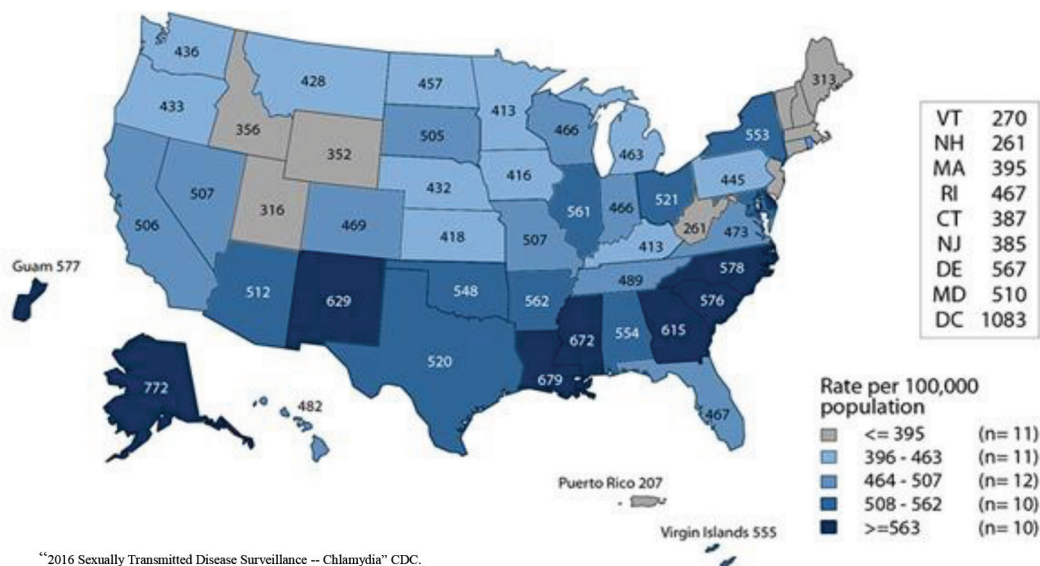
\$868

Million¹

estimated amount that chlamydia
will cost the health care system

This includes pelvic
inflammatory disease.

Rates of reported chlamydia cases by state (2016)



Reasons for concern

Chlamydia can have dramatic long- term effects for men and women. Women can experience pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and possible deadly ectopic pregnancies. The infection in men, can sometimes spread to the testicles and cause infertility. Untreated chlamydia also increases an individual's chance of getting or giving HIV.

¹Owusu-Edusei K, et al. *The estimated direct medical cost of selected sexually transmitted infections in the United States, 2008.* Sex Transm Dis 2013; 40(3): pp. 197-201.

NCSD's Role in combating STDs



Capacity Building

NCSD seeks to build the capacity—skills, knowledge base, infrastructure, and resources—of our members by providing technical assistance and training, developing and sharing informational resources, and facilitating peer learning and support.



Policy and Advocacy

NCSD educates policy makers, public health professionals, organizational allies and the general public about why STDs are a public health priority and what is needed to address them most effectively.



National Leadership and Strategic Communications

NCSD serves as, and amplifies, the voice of our members. We seek to create a sense of urgency around the issue of STDs and communicate how the issue fits into the broader sexual health landscape.



Promoting Health Equity

NCSD ensures that disproportionately affected communities—those at the heart of the U.S. STD epidemic—are the focus of STD programs and services and receive the most attention and support.



Organizational Strengthening

NCSD strives to diversify financial support, build staff capacity, and enhance board leadership to maximize organizational sustainability and impact.

What you can do:

Get informed

There are policies that interact with local STD program including: expedited partner therapy, third trimester syphilis testing in high risk areas, extragenital testing, and needle exchange programs.

Support STD prevention

Federal and State level STD funding supports important staff who are on the front lines of STD prevention, including Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) and other department of health staff. It also supports testing, treatment, and prevention efforts. More resources and funding results in health departments being able to reach more people and prevent the healthcare and health costs of STDs.

Connect with your local STD program and NCSD

Visit one of our resources listed below to find out how you can play an active role in reducing the nation's STD epidemic.

Resources:

Health Departments across the United States are responsible for tracking, preventing and treating cases of STDs. For more information about what your state is doing for syphilis, chlamydia or gonorrhea visit your local health department's website or reach out to NCSD and we can connect you

For information about how to support local health departments visit National Coalition of STD Director's (NCSD) website at: ncsddc.org

For information about how to prevent and identify syphilis, gonorrhea or chlamydia, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website at: cdc.gov/std/syphilis, cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea, or cdc.gov/std/chlamydia



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ncsddc.org