

Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention and Control

Why is STD prevention and control important to Iowans?

STDs affect a large number of people. Chlamydia and gonorrhea are among the top three most commonly reported conditions in Iowa. There were 15,095 chlamydia and 6,919 gonorrhea cases reported in 2020. Syphilis has become more common over the past decade, with 500 cases reported in 2020. This is a significant increase compared to just nine years prior, when only 70 cases were reported. If these infections go untreated, severe and costly health complications can result. Untreated chlamydia and gonorrhea may lead to permanent damage of the reproductive organs, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women and fertility problems in men and women. Untreated gonorrhea can spread through the blood and affect multiple parts of the body, including the blood, joints, and skin. Untreated syphilis also spreads throughout the body and can infect and cause permanent damage to the nervous system, including the brain, eyes and internal structures of the ear. (cont.)

Did you know?

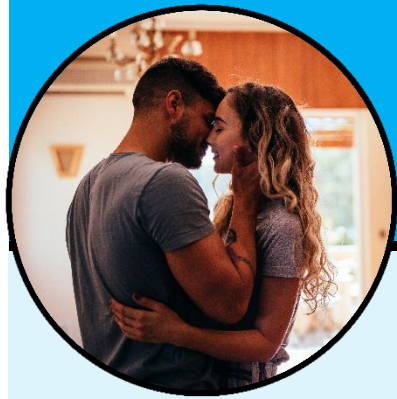
Gonorrhea infections have increased rapidly in the state, with the number of reported cases more than doubling from 2015 to 2018.

A focus on health equity

The safety net STD testing program in Iowa focuses primarily on individuals who are uninsured, underinsured or seeking confidential services. Additionally, populations that are disproportionately affected by these infections (e.g., adolescents and young adults) are prioritized for outreach activities.

What does the department do?

- Maintains a highly trained staff of Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) who work with medical providers and patients to ensure individuals diagnosed with HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea or chlamydia are connected with needed services. This includes working with patients to confidentially notify sex and needle-sharing partners of possible exposure and connecting them with appropriate testing and treatment, stopping the chain of infection. Annually, DIS follow up on more than 21,000 reported diagnoses and work with more than 4,200 people diagnosed with or exposed to one or more of these infections. More information can be found at the [Sexually Transmitted Disease Program web page](#).
- Provides safety net STD testing and treatment services in partnership with approximately 58 clinic sites, the State Hygienic Laboratory and the Family Planning Council of Iowa.
- Provides consultation to medical providers regarding the most up-to-date and evidence-based treatment and testing.
- Promotes screening of people who are at increased risk of infection, regardless of the presence of signs or symptoms (e.g., adolescents and young adults, pregnant women, men who have sex with men, etc.). Over 30,000 tests are conducted annually for chlamydia and gonorrhea at our safety net clinics, plus tens of thousands by private providers.
- Promotes expedited partner therapy (EPT) for the treatment of sex partners of those who are diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea when partners do not seek an examination with a medical provider. In 2020, more than 1,400 doses of medication were given for EPT via our safety net clinics.



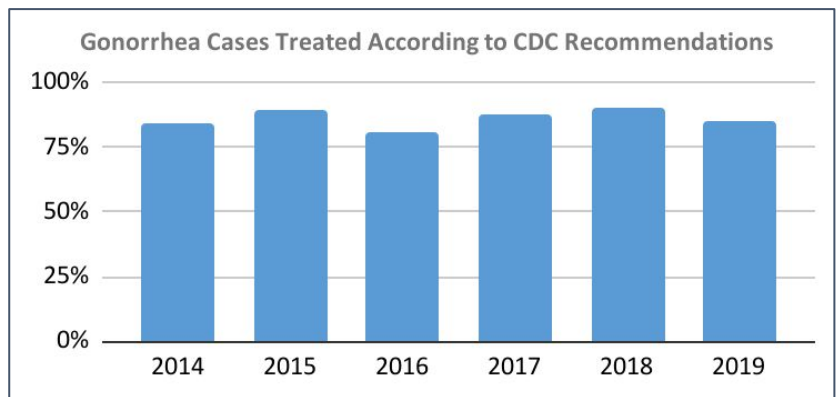
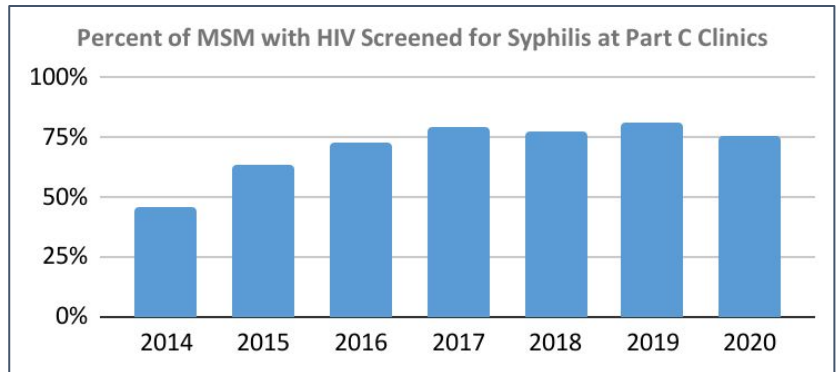
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Why is STD prevention and control important to Iowans? (cont.)

All of these infections can cause serious problems in pregnant women, affecting the fetus and newborn. Preterm labor may occur. Eye infections in newborns may result from untreated chlamydia or gonorrhea in the mother. Untreated chlamydia can cause pneumonia in the newborn. Untreated syphilis in pregnant women leads to congenital syphilis in newborns, which can result in stillbirth or neonatal death.

There are some communities in which certain infections have become more common and concentrated, making it easier for someone to become infected. Adolescents and young adults (ages 15-29) are more affected by chlamydia and gonorrhea. Gay men and other men who have sex with men are more affected by syphilis. It is important to remember that any person who has sex can become infected with any STD. Many STDs do not produce obvious symptoms, meaning that individuals may be unaware of their infection and unknowingly spread it to others.

How do we measure our progress?



What can Iowans do to help?

Anyone who is sexually active should be aware of and utilize STD risk reduction strategies as appropriate, including limiting the number of sex partners, mutual monogamy, correct and consistent use of condoms, routinely seeking STD testing, and getting vaccinated for infections like hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV).

Resources

	SFY 2019 Actual	SFY 2020 Actual	SFY 2021 Estimate
State Funds*	\$568,452	\$568,452	\$568,452
Federal Funds	\$582,255	\$565,326	\$579,558
Total Funds	\$1,150,707	\$1,133,778	\$1,148,010
FTEs	3.95	3.74	3.85

*State funds for STD, HIV & HCV were consolidated in SFY 2018.