



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 10, 2023

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MDHHS encourages Michigan residents to get tested during STI Awareness Week

LANSING, Mich. -- During Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Awareness Week, April 9-15, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) urges sexually active Michigan residents to incorporate discussions about sexual health and regular STI testing into their regular health care routine.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea remain the most common STIs in Michigan, while syphilis has been increasing at an alarming rate across demographic groups throughout the state. Syphilis has increased 25% since 2020 and rates have doubled since 2013. Most of this increase has been seen in heterosexuals. In 2013, 1 in 5 new transmissions of syphilis were among heterosexuals with the remaining among men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2022, heterosexuals accounted for 1 of every 2 cases of infectious syphilis. With the increase in heterosexual cases, there has been an increase in congenital syphilis, or babies born exposed to syphilis. The number of congenital syphilis cases reported in 2021 and 2022 have exceeded any seen in Michigan since 1993.

"We can slow down the spread of STIs through routine testing, which helps keep ourselves and our partners safe" said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, MDHHS chief medical executive. "Early treatment of STIs is critical to avoid serious complications. We encourage Michiganders to make STI testing part of their regular health care routine."

Contributing factors to these increases include limited access to screening and treatment complicated by COVID-19, stigma that limits open conversation about sexual health, substance use including opioids and changing patterns in how and where people meet sexual partners. Additionally, as the numbers have increased, the funding and staff available to follow-up on cases and assure timely treatment has remained stagnant. These STIs are 100% treatable, but if left untreated they can lead to other serious health complications. MDHHS encourages sexually active people in Michigan to speak to their partners about their sexual health and receive routine testing.

In Michigan, those diagnosed with an STI can receive Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) -- an option that allows providers to streamline the process of treating partners of their patients in select cases of gonorrhea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis. EPT allows clinicians to provide treatment for partners without a separate visit, which also reduces the chance of their patients becoming reinfected.

Information about STI testing at local health departments and additional testing locations can be found at Michigan.gov/HIVSTI. More information and resources about STIs are available on [CDC's website](http://www.cdc.gov). Data, resources and technical assistance for Michigan's STI program are also available at Michigan.gov/HIVSTI.

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