

Burden of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) in Sutter County

Sexually transmitted diseases are a serious public health concern which can cause serious health problems if left untreated. While sexually transmitted diseases can affect any member of our community, higher rates are seen in some populations more than others. Underlying drivers related to increasing sexually transmitted disease rates are rooted in complex social factors including substance use, incarceration, the exchange for sex for money/housing/other resources, poverty, homelessness, and disparities in access to care (1).

Syphilis

- In Sutter County syphilis rates have increased at an alarming rate, with rates up to 13 times higher in 2022 compared to 2016.
- While Syphilis is diagnosed 1.5 times more in men than women in Sutter County, roughly 20% of women were pregnant when diagnosed with syphilis.
- In California Congenital Syphilis rates have increased 122% from 2015 to 2018. Babies born with syphilis can experience serious health problems, including premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects, blindness, hearing loss, stillbirth, and death.
- In 2020, Sutter County had a rate of 28.7 new syphilis cases per 100,000, higher than the California average of 19.5 and the US average of 12.17 per 100,000 people.
- In 2021, Sutter County had a rate of 41.5 new syphilis cases per 100,000. *
- In 2022 Sutter County had a rate of 22.7 new syphilis cases per 100,000. *
 - The figures for Sutter County's new syphilis cases for 2021 and 2022 are preliminary and subject to review and confirmation by CDPH.
- From 2016-2020, Black Sutter County residents have the highest burden of disease compared to other race and ethnicity groups.

Sutter County Public Health Communicable Disease Program

The Sutter County Public Health Communicable Disease Program works to contain sexually transmitted diseases in our community by coordinating with local health care providers and labs to receive reports of who is sick, coordinating treatment and providing case management, investigating who may be exposed, and contacting those individuals so they can receive timely treatment. The Communicable Disease Program also provides outreach and education to the community about sexually transmitted diseases and how they can stay safe.

Targets for improvement:

- Improve public education and sexually transmitted disease awareness.
- Increase routine screening for sexually transmitted disease, especially in populations at high risk.
- Provide education and support to assess risk factors and screen for, diagnose, and treat sexually transmitted disease.
- Increase access to prenatal care for pregnant women, including routing third-trimester syphilis testing.

Strategic Efforts and Activities to Reduce Sexually Transmitted Diseases

California Department of Public Health Integrated Statewide Strategic Plan: Ending the Epidemics

Addressing sexually transmitted diseases is a complex issue with many contributing factors. This document will summarize strategic efforts planned by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to reduce sexually transmitted diseases, the full report is available [here](#).

- Offering more routine, opt-out, HIV, HCV, and STI testing and linkage to care in emergency departments, hospitals, primary care clinics, and jails.
- Expanding access to HIV, HCV, and STI treatment, especially through non-traditional care settings.
- Improving outreach and provider training to make it easier for people to access post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and initiate and adhere to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- Promoting comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education and condom access in schools.
- Continuing to educate providers and patients about U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable), which reduces stigma and fear for people living with HIV.
- Increasing the number, size, and scope of syringe services programs and other harm reduction services, both in urban and rural areas throughout California.
- Advancing our use of data to equip the local public health workforce with the information they need to reach out to people in need of care and link them to life-saving services in a person-centered way.

References:

1. California Department of Public Health. 2019 STD Snapshot. Accessed December 14, 2022. 2019 STD Snapshot (ca.gov)
2. Sutter County Public Health. Communicable Diseases. Accessed December 12, 2022. [Communicable Diseases | Sutter County, CA](#)
3. California Department of Public Health. Ending the Epidemics Strategic Plan. Accessed December 12, 2022. [Ending the Epidemics: Addressing HIV, Hepatitis C, and Sexually Transmitted Infections in California - Integrated Statewide Strategic Plan Overview, 2022-2026](#)