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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STDs Surge Across the U.S. April is STD Awareness Month - Talk. Test. Treat.

DUPAGE COUNTY—Three common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have increased sharply across the United States for the fourth year in a row. April is STD Awareness Month, and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) is joining Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and partners to help reverse this trend by calling on individuals and healthcare providers to take these three actions to protect themselves, their partners, and their patients from STDs: ***Talk, Test, and Treat.***

The following statistics represent a dramatic increase in the number of cases from 2000 to 2017 in DuPage County:

- Early syphilis – 55 cases in 2017, up 588 percent
- Gonorrhea – 451 cases in 2017, up 121 percent
- Chlamydia – 2,495 cases in 2017, up 241 percent

Untreated STDs Can Have Serious Effects

Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are curable with the right medicines, yet most cases go undiagnosed and untreated – which can lead to severe health problems that include infertility (inability to become pregnant), ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb), stillbirth in infants, and increased HIV risk.

Anyone who has sex can get an STD, but some groups are more affected than others, including young people aged 15-29, gay and bisexual men, other men who have sex with men, and some racial and ethnic minorities. Prior studies suggest a range of factors may be at play – from socioeconomic challenges, like poverty, to issues of stigma and discrimination.

The good news? **All STDs can be prevented and treated, and most can be cured.**

-More-

Here's how individuals and healthcare providers can add the *Talk. Test. Treat.* strategy into their health routine:

Individuals can

- Talk openly with partners and healthcare providers about sex and STDs.
- Get tested. Because many STDs have no symptoms, getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have an infection.
- If either you or your partner test positive for an STD that can be cured, both of you need to start treatment immediately to avoid getting re-infected. STDs that aren't curable can be treated.

Healthcare providers can

- Provide the best care possible by talking with patients about sexual health and safe sex practices.
- Test patients as recommended by CDC.
- Follow CDC's STD Treatment Guidelines to make sure patients get successful treatment and care.

The Lowdown on How to Prevent STDs

Practice abstinence: The surest way to avoid STDs is to not have sex. This means not having vaginal, oral, or anal sex.

Use Condoms: Using condoms and dental dams correctly every time you have sex can help you avoid STDs.

Have Fewer Partners: Agree to only have sex with one person who agrees to only have sex with you.

For information on "Talking with Your Teens about Sex: Going Beyond 'the Talk,'" see: www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/talking_teens.pdf.

Individuals who are sexually active should talk with their physician to see what testing is right for them. The Health Department's STD Clinic also offers confidential testing, diagnosis, treatment and prevention counseling for STDs as well as testing and treatment referrals for HIV and Hepatitis C. The clinic also provides evaluation and treatment for human papillomavirus (HPV)-related conditions. To schedule an appointment in STD Clinic, call the DuPage County Health Department at (630) 682-7400. For more information, see www.cdc.gov/std/ and www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/stds.