



MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KCHD releases status report on sexually transmitted infections

Knoxville, Tenn. — The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) released its 2018 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Status report today. The purpose of the report is to educate the community about STIs, inform health care professionals, and support intervention and prevention work. KCHD epidemiologists routinely gather, analyze and report data on current and emerging health issues.

“To effectively respond to the health needs of our community, we must understand the challenges we face,” said KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. “Providing reports such as this is a crucial role of public health and an important part of our work to improve the health of everyone in the County.”

The document provides an overview of the most current (2017) reportable STIs in Knox County and specifically includes chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV. Other STIs may be more prevalent in Knox County, such as human papillomavirus (HPV), herpes and trichomoniasis, but rates are difficult to determine because not all STIs are reportable diseases. The report will be available on KCHD’s website here: knoxcounty.org/health/epidemiology/reports_data.

“Fortunately, we’re not seeing the high rates of congenital syphilis that much of the country is experiencing,” said KCHD Lead Epidemiologist Roberta Sturm. “What is concerning, however, are the County’s high rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea, especially among young black residents. And, while we aren’t seeing a dramatic increase in HIV, concern about a potential HIV outbreak remains due to the increase in IV drug use.”

Abstinence is the only 100 percent effective method at preventing STIs. For sexually active individuals, the best STI prevention methods include mutual monogamy, reduction in the number of sexual partners, consistent condom use, HPV vaccination and regular STI testing. KCHD routinely screens for and treats STIs. Contact investigations are performed for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV cases.

Confidential STI testing is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at all three KCHD offices: the main location at 140 Dameron Ave. in the Communicable Disease Clinic; the West Clinic at 1028 Old Cedar Bluff; and the Teague Clinic at 405 Dante Road. Appointments are not necessary as patients are seen on a walk-in basis. More information is available by calling 865-215-5370.

About Knox County Health Department

As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. KCHD investigates disease outbreaks, identifies community health threats, conducts extensive outreach and education, prepares for public health emergencies, provides and connects the public with medical care, enforces food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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