



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 25, 2016

**CONTACT:**

Divya Mohan Little – 312-814-4669

[Divya.little@illinois.gov](mailto:Divya.little@illinois.gov)

### **25<sup>th</sup> Annual HIV/STD Conference - Celebrating Success, Shaping the Future**

#### *Sexually Transmitted Diseases increase while HIV decreases*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual HIV/STD Conference, hosted by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois Public Health Association, runs October 25-27, 2016 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The conference brings together people living with HIV/AIDS, researchers, clinicians, local health departments, health professionals, community based organizations, activists, and government agencies to share and educate each other about HIV and STDs.

“While we have made many advances over the years, Illinois, like the rest of the country, is seeing a resurgence of sexually transmitted diseases,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual HIV/STD Conference is a great opportunity to reinforce the need for a community-wide approach to address the increase in STDs, and to share successful strategies in reducing new cases of HIV.”

In 2015, more cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis combined were reported than ever before in the U.S, according to the recently released Centers for Disease Control and Prevention annual [Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report, 2015](#). Cases of these three STDs continue to increase in Illinois as well. In 2015, Illinois reported more than 90,000 chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis cases. In Illinois, the rate of chlamydia increased by 4.5 percent, the rate of gonorrhea increased by 7.2 percent, and the rate of primary and secondary syphilis increased by 26.9 percent compared to 2014.

Nationally, Illinois ranked 11th by chlamydia rate, 15th by gonorrhea rate, and 11th by primary and secondary syphilis rate. Cook County ranked 2nd by cases for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis only behind Los Angeles County.

Young people aged 15-24 years and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men remain at greatest risk. Similar to national trends, young people in Illinois aged 15-24 years accounted for 67 percent of chlamydia diagnoses and 58 percent of gonorrhea diagnoses. Men accounted for 92 percent of primary and secondary syphilis cases.

-more-

Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois](https://www.facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois) or follow us on Twitter @IDPH

Nationally Accredited by PHAB



Conversely, cases of HIV continue to decrease in Illinois. In 2015, Illinois reported roughly 1,540 cases of HIV, a two percent decrease compared to 2014.

Nationally, Illinois ranked 15th in terms of the estimated number of HIV diagnoses among adults and adolescents when compared to other states.

Illinois mirrors the national data. People aged 13-24 years accounted for 28 percent of new HIV cases. Men accounted for 84 percent HIV cases. Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men continue to be the group most heavily affected by HIV in Illinois. Men who have sex with men represent an estimated two percent of the population, but accounted for nearly 78 percent of all persons diagnosed with HIV in Illinois in 2015. The steepest increases in HIV cases occurred among young Hispanic males who have sex with men aged 13-24, who saw an increase of 120 percent over the past decade.

HIV and STD prevention requires strong and sustained public health commitment and engagement from many players:

- Providers: make HIV/STD screening a standard part of medical care, especially in pregnant women. Integrate HIV/STD prevention and treatment into prenatal care and other routine visits.
- Public: talk openly about HIV/STDs.
- Parents and providers: offer young people safe, effective ways to access needed information and services.
- State and local health departments: continue to direct resources to people hardest hit by HIV/STDs and work with community partners to maximize their impact.
- Individuals: practice abstinence or use condoms, be in a mutually monogamous relationship, and reduce the number of sex partners.

This past summer, Governor Bruce Rauner signed Public Act 99-0772 to amend insurance law to provide coverage for all FDA approved and CDC recommended HIV prevention and treatment drugs. These drugs include pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP - a way for people who do not have HIV, but who are at substantial risk of getting it, to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day. PrEP is a medication that when used consistently, prevents HIV infection in someone who is exposed to HIV through unprotected sex or injection drug use. The new law makes it available by prescription to any Medicaid participant without prior approval.

During this year's conference, IDPH is also announcing its new PrEP website. The [www.Prep4Illinois.com](http://www.Prep4Illinois.com) website includes a PrEP enrollment application that IDPH can use to ensure clients are directed to the appropriate payer source for PrEP medication; including Medicaid, private insurance, Gilead co-insurance patient assistant programs, or IDPH.

For questions about HIV/STD or to speak to a hotline resource counselor, call the HIV/STD Hotline at 1-800-243-2437.

###