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April is STD Awareness Month *Do You Know Your Status?*

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) pose a serious public health threat to Arizonans. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) reports that more than 24,000 cases of Chlamydia and 4,000 cases of gonorrhea were diagnosed in 2008. The state is one of the highest in the country for rates of syphilis and congenital syphilis (syphilis in newborns).

“It’s tragic that so many young people continue to be affected by STDs. Most STDs are curable or treatable, and they are all preventable,” said Dr Melanie Taylor, Medical Director of the Office of HIV, STD and Hepatitis Services at the Arizona Department of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says about 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States and almost half of these are among young people ages 15-24. STDs cost the U.S. health care system as much as \$15.9 billion annually. Untreated, STDs such as chlamydia and gonorrhea are major causes of infertility among women.

These and other common STDs can increase the risk of HIV transmission for both women and men. Since STDs often show no symptoms, sexually active persons should be aware of their risk and get tested. Pregnant women and their medical providers should be aware of the risk of syphilis and ensure that syphilis testing is part of prenatal care.

STD screening, early diagnosis, treatment, and treatment of sex partners are vital to prevent serious health consequences and increased transmission. *Express STD testing is available at a low-cost of \$20 which includes syphilis, Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV testing at the Maricopa County Public Health Clinic: 1645 East Roosevelt, Phoenix Phone: 602-506-1678 Online at: http://www.maricopa.gov/Public_Health/ControlPrevention/STDs/default.aspx.*

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