



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
February 15, 2008

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COUNTY LAUNCHES STD AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ***Health Officials Urge: Get the Facts, Get Tested***

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) today urged the public to protect themselves against Syphilis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, some of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

“Syphilis has risen about 200 percent since 2003,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “We’ve also seen a significant increase in Chlamydia and Gonorrhea cases. These are preventable diseases. Today, we’re asking the public to take steps to make sure they do not give—or get — an STD.”

Television and radio public service announcements providing information on STDs and where to go for testing have been created to enhance existing outreach efforts. The PSAs are designed to promote awareness of the increase in STDs.

Syphilis rates have gone from 109 cases in 2003 to 312 in 2007 – a 186 percent increase. The steady increase in cases may be attributed to individuals not being forthcoming about their sexual practices, making it difficult for healthcare providers to determine if they have been infected.

“Syphilis is sometimes called ‘the great imitator’ because its signs and symptoms are similar to other diseases,” added Dr. Wooten. “Also, when you are infected with one STD, you are more susceptible to infection with other STDs. We urge everyone to get the facts on STDs and get tested.”

Chlamydia cases also increased 25 percent in the last five years from 10,249 cases in 2003 to 12,796 cases in 2007. There also were 1,972 cases of Gonorrhea in 2003 and 2,403 in 2007, a 22 percent increase.

HHSA’s HIV, STD and Hepatitis Branch works in partnership with community agencies to increase awareness of STDs. It also sends out annual bulletins to about 8,000 physicians with the latest information and statistics on STDs. HHSA offers testing at its STD Clinics and several other sites throughout the county.

For information on STDs and clinic hours and locations, contact the HHSA HIV, STD and Hepatitis Clinic at (619) 692-8550 or visit the HHSA Website at <http://www2.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa/>.

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