Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among Minnesota Adolescents

Minnesota STI Rates
Even though they account for only 7% of the population in Minnesota, adolescents ages 15-19 accounted for 25% of chlamydia and 18% of gonorrhea cases in 2017. Consistent with national trends, chlamydia and gonorrhea rates are disproportionately high among female youth in Minnesota. After a 15% spike in 2016, the chlamydia rate decreased very slightly by 0.7% in 2017. Gonorrhea rates among 15-19 year olds have varied over time, but in the past two years gonorrhea rates have increased by 82% to 316 cases per 100,000. This is the highest figure in over 10 years.

There were 8 new cases of HIV among adolescents ages 15-19 in Minnesota in 2017, which is a decrease of 47% from 2016 when 15 new cases diagnosed among this age group. There are currently 56 adolescents (age 15-19) living with HIV in Minnesota.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities
STI rates are disproportionately high for adolescent populations of color in Minnesota, compared to white populations. Rates for both chlamydia and gonorrhea were highest among Black youth, followed by Latinx* and American Indian youth (Figure 3). The gonorrhea rate is 33 times higher for black youth and the chlamydia rate is 9 times higher for black youth when compared to the rate for white youth.

Strategies to eliminate these persistent disparities must address social determinants of health (i.e. poverty, racism and unequal access to health care and education), which disproportionately affect the health of adolescents of color.

Note: The term “Black” is used rather than “African American” in order to be consistent with state and national racial categories and because the data presented in this racial category includes both foreign-born and U.S.-born populations.

Latinx is a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina.

1 Minnesota Department of Health, STD and HIV Section, 2017

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