

Jackson County Department of Public Health

Melissa McKnight
Health Education Supervisor/PIO
828-587-8288

2016-24
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2016

JCDPH HIGHLIGHTS HEALTH IMPACTS OF STDS DURING STD AWARENESS MONTH

Nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur in the United States every year costing the American healthcare system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Young people, aged 15-24, and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men continue to be at greatest risk for infection. Why? Health officials know that individual risk behaviors aren't the only reason—rather environmental, social and cultural factors like difficulty accessing quality health care contribute to this higher STD burden.

Despite this news, there are effective ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat STDs. STD screening and early diagnoses are essential in preventing transmission and the long term health consequences of STDs. The Jackson County Department of Public Health provides confidential counseling and testing for STDs (such as HIV, syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and more) available daily with appointments recommended. Parental permission is not required and most services, including treatment as recommended per CDC guidelines, are free of charge. For more information about testing, call the Health Department at 828-587-8289.

Abstaining from sex, reducing the number of sexual partners, and consistently and correctly using condoms are all effective prevention strategies. Safe, effective vaccines are also available to prevent hepatitis B and some types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) that causes disease and cancer. And for all individuals who are sexually active—particular young people—STD screening and prompt treatment (if infected) are critical to protect a person's health and prevent transmission to others.

In honor of STD Awareness Month, know your status. Get tested. Call the Jackson County Department of Public Health for more information on STD testing and vaccines at 828-587-8289.

###