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Tuesday, June 17, 2008
Story last updated at 6/17/2008 - 9:32 am

Alaska rates rank high in chlamydia, low in HIV

There were 1,206 known HIV cases in state from 1982 to 2007

the associated press

FAIRBANKS - Alaska continues to rank high nationally in the rate of chlamydia cases but relatively low in the most serious sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, according to reports by the state Division of Public Health.

The 2006 figures were compiled by the Centers for Disease Control.

Alaska ranked first or second in chlamydia, 25th in gonorrhea and 28th in syphilis but low in HIV.

"We have a low prevalency rate in the state and we would like to stay that way," said Mollie Rosier, manager of the Section of Epidemiology's HIV/STD program.

The most common method of HIV transmission in Alaska was men having sex with men. Other categories included heterosexual contact with a partner known to have HIV or injection drug use.

Rosier said statistics were divided into two time periods because there were not enough cases for year-to-year analysis: 1982-2002 and 2003-2007.

There were 1,206 known HIV cases in Alaska from 1982 to 2007. Thirty-seven first-known HIV diagnosis cases occurred in 2007. Of the cases reported, 81 percent of people with the disease were males and 58 percent were white.

The chlamydia bulletin said the disease plays a role in facilitating HIV transmission. However, with such a high rate of chlamydia and such a low rate of HIV, it was impossible to tell if chlamydia played a role in contraction of HIV in Alaska, Rosier said

The bulletin stated that 4,911 cases of chlamydia were reported in Alaska during 2007, an 8 percent increase over



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2006. That was part of a significant increase of chlamydia cases in Alaska since 1996, reaching a rate of 49 cases per 100,000 people on average.

The program's Donna Cerere prepared the bulletins and said there was no easy or simple answer to why Alaska has such a high rate of chlamydia and gonorrhea. The rise could be a byproduct of a more sensitive test, she said.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. However, the more times a woman contracts the disease, the higher the risk of infertility, Cerere said.

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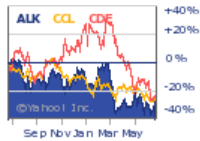
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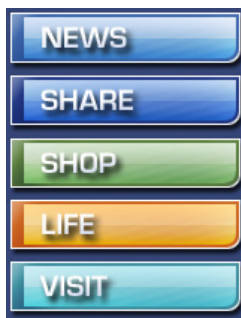
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