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South Dakota STDs up in 2008

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Posted: Tuesday, January 13, 2009

SIoux FALLS (AP) -- Some sexually transmitted diseases peaked at record levels in 2008 in South Dakota, while other infections dropped, according to the South Dakota Health Department's infectious disease report.

Chlamydia cases reached an all-time high of 2,948, up more than 300 from 2007. Reports of gonorrhea rose more than 29 percent to 370, the highest since 1988. The number of HIV/AIDS cases climbed back to the 2006 mark of 34.

E. coli numbers also rose sharply, but rabies, West Nile and hepatitis C fell.

State Epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger blames the STD increases on a failure of following basic prevention guidelines such as abstinence or monogamous sex.

"Sexually transmitted diseases are a complex bag of prevention, treatment and personal behavior," he said. "There needs to be more abstinence, monogamy and, if that fails, safe sex."

Some of the increase in reported chlamydia cases among Native Americans is likely due to an improved Indian Health Service screening program on the reservations, Kightlinger said.

The report shows that STDs are still most often found in young people ages 15 to 24, followed by 25 to 39.

"The statistics are proof that young people need sex education to be able to protect themselves," said Charon Asetoyer, executive director of Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center in Lake Andes.

"If you do not have the tools to protect yourself -- the information -- you are going to see an increase in the number of sexually transmitted diseases."

Disease numbers reported in 2008:

- Chlamydia: Cases climbed to a high of 2,948, up from 2,620 in 2007.
- Gonorrhea: After dropping from 367 in 2006 to 261 in 2007, cases rose to 370 in 2008.
- HIV/AIDS: Up from 25 cases in 2007 to 34 in 2008.
- E. Coli: Rose from 29 in 2005 to 51 in 2008.
- Rabies: Dropped from 38 in 2007 to 24 cases, the lowest in 48 years.
- West Nile Virus: Dropped from 208 in 2007 to 39 in 2008.
- Hepatitis C: Dropped from 317 in 2007 to 277 in 2008.
- Tuberculosis: Rose slightly from 13 in 2007 to 16 in 2008.

Kightlinger said more sporadic cases of E. coli are occurring, with a few in families.

"It's difficult to address if a case here and there are not connected," he said. "It gets back to prevention by washing hands, cooking meat and washing vegetables."

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Verovida wrote on Jan 14, 2009 5:45 AM:

" The Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality

It is so unfortunate that even in today's day and age, diseases so easily prevented with simple education, communication, and precautions, continue to proliferate. But the increases of late are not surprising given the US stance over the last few years denying education, thwarting communication, and creating campaigns against risk-reduction methods.

I finally took it into my own hands and used a resource called The Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality and

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