



Cook County Department of Public Health

Hearing- Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis

Item 24-3172

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Cook County Department of Public Health



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CCDPH STI Surveillance Reports

- **New data posted to CCDPH website**
- 2023 report published October 2024
- 2022 report published June 2024



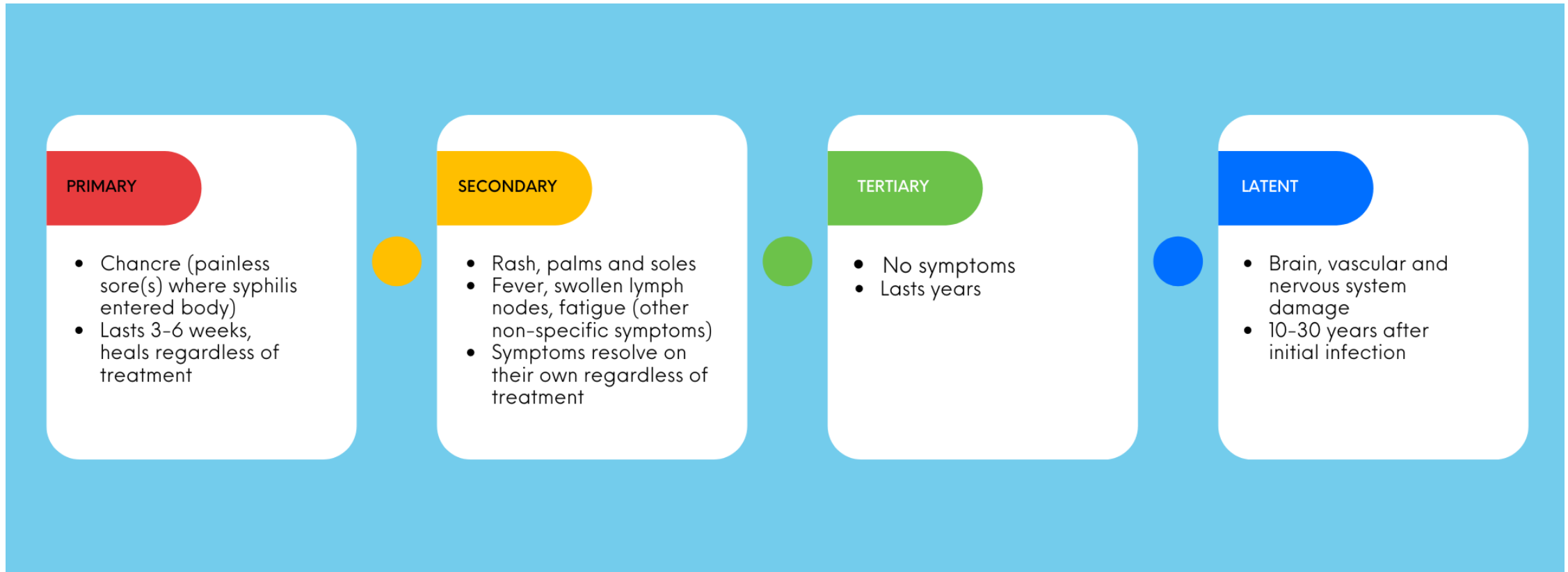
Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Surveillance Reports

- **STI Surveillance Report, 2023**
- STI Surveillance Report, 2022
- STI Surveillance Report, 2021
- STI Surveillance Report, 2017-2019
- STI Surveillance Report, 2016
- STI Surveillance Report, 2014
- STI Surveillance Report, 2009-2011
- STI Surveillance Report, 2006-2008



Syphilis Stages

Four stages



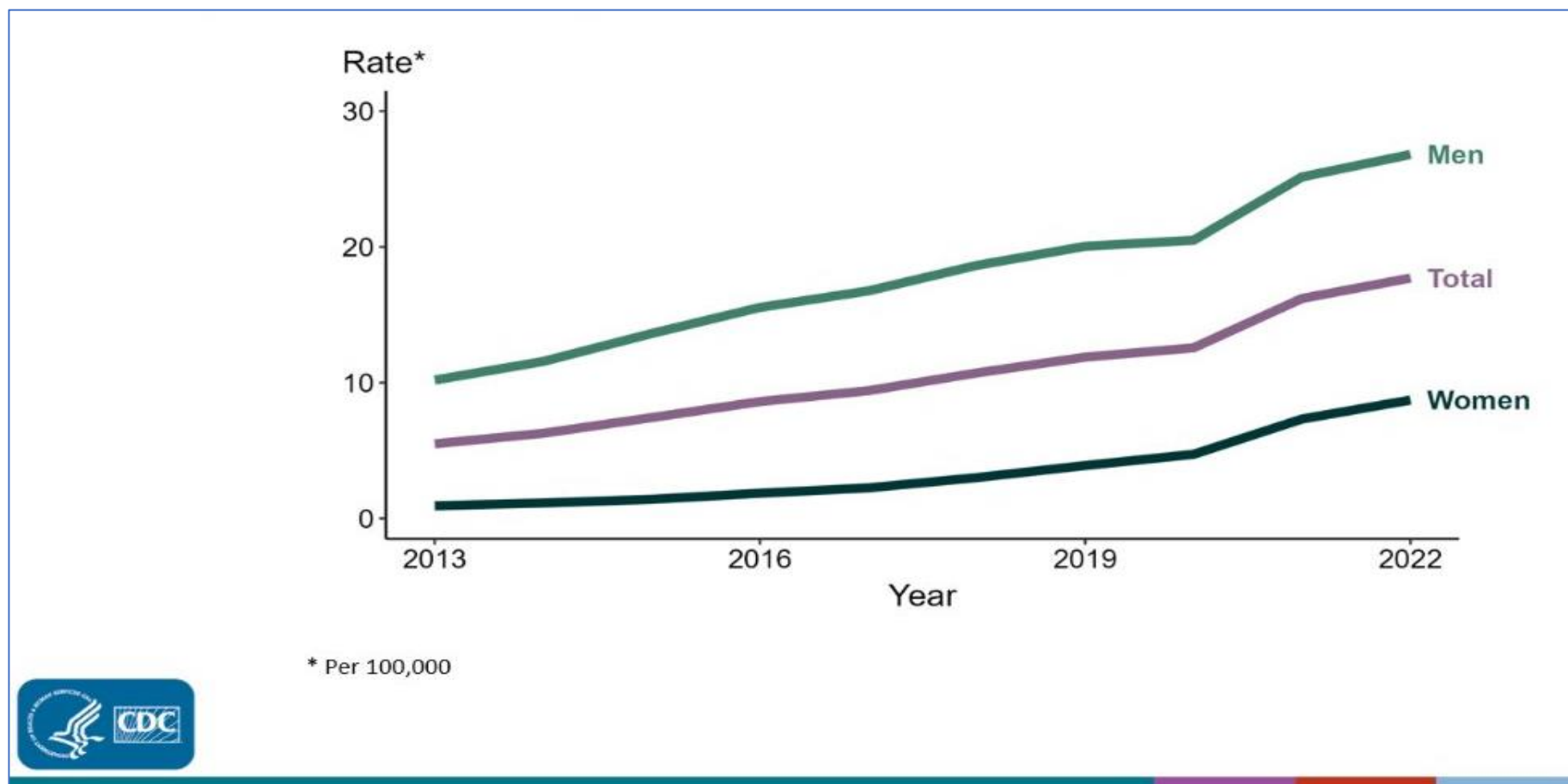
Untreated Syphilis Infections

- Neurosyphilis, ocular syphilis, otosyphilis
 - Dementia, vision loss, hearing loss
- Congenital syphilis
 - Pregnant person passes syphilis to unborn baby
 - Birth defects
 - long bone deformities
 - Nerve/brain damage
 - Blindness
 - Miscarriage
 - Stillbirth



Primary and Secondary Syphilis

Rates of Reported Cases by Sex, United States, 2013-2022



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Primary and Secondary Syphilis Cases (PSS)

Suburban Cook County, 2014-2023



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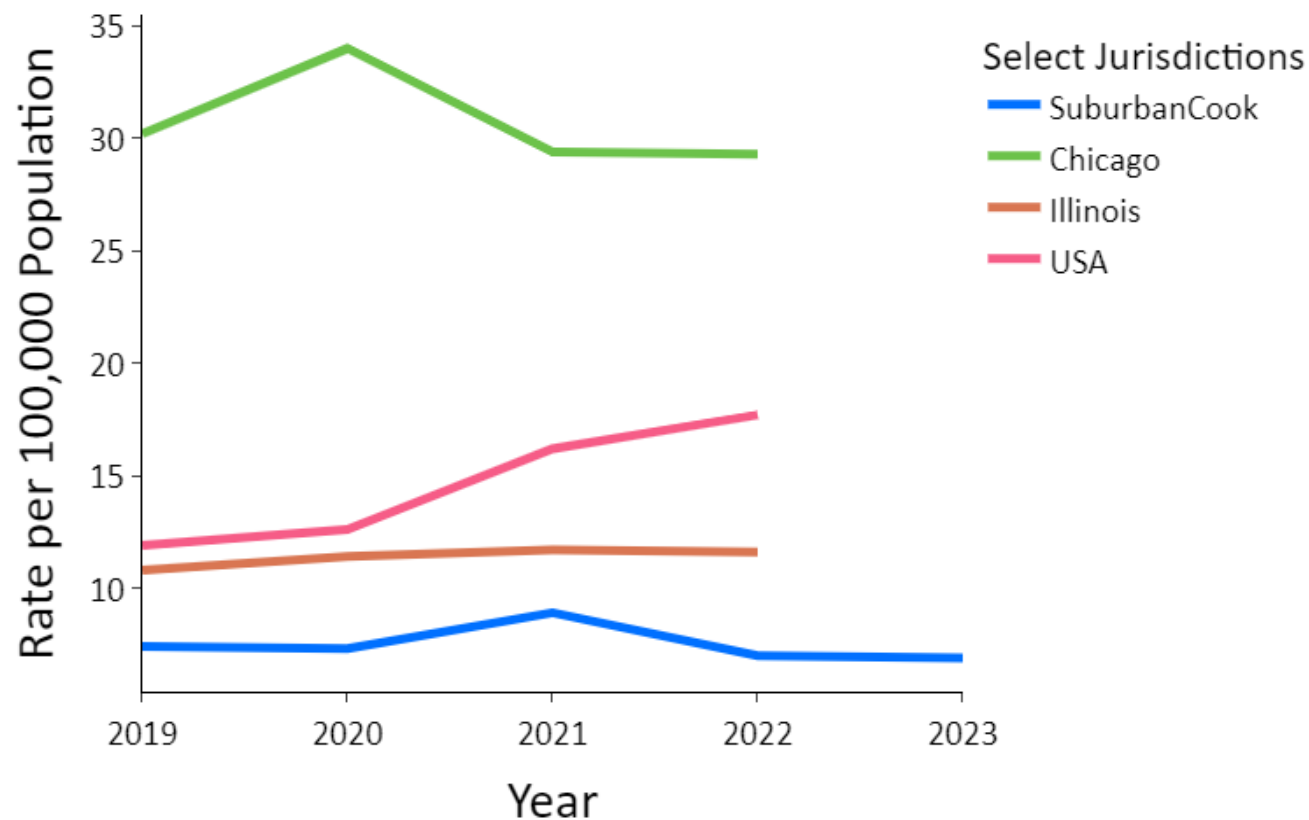
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[2023 Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance Report \(cookcountypublichealth.org\)](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/2023-Sexually-Transmitted-Infections-Surveillance-Report)

PSS Rates

Select Jurisdictions, 2019-2023



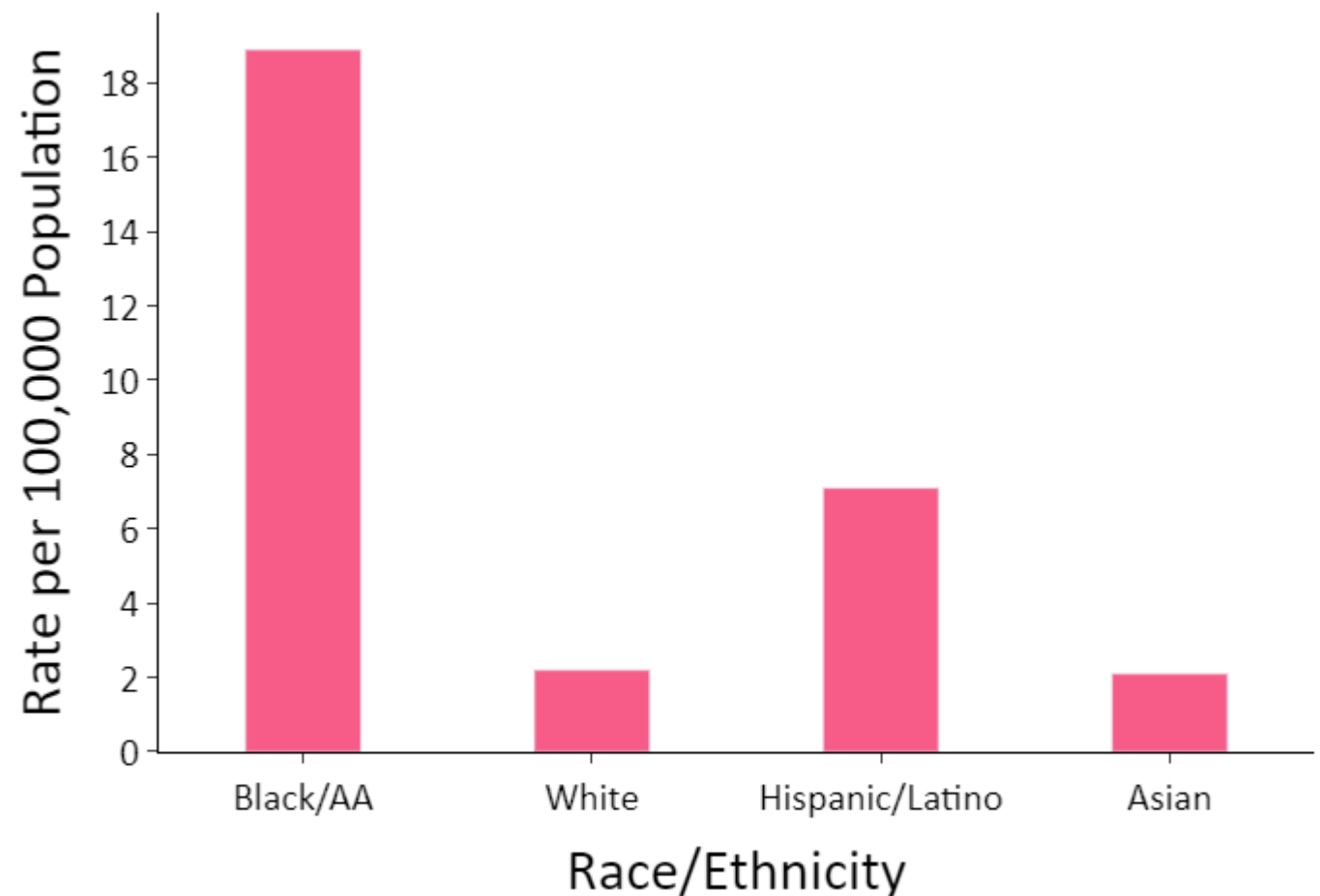
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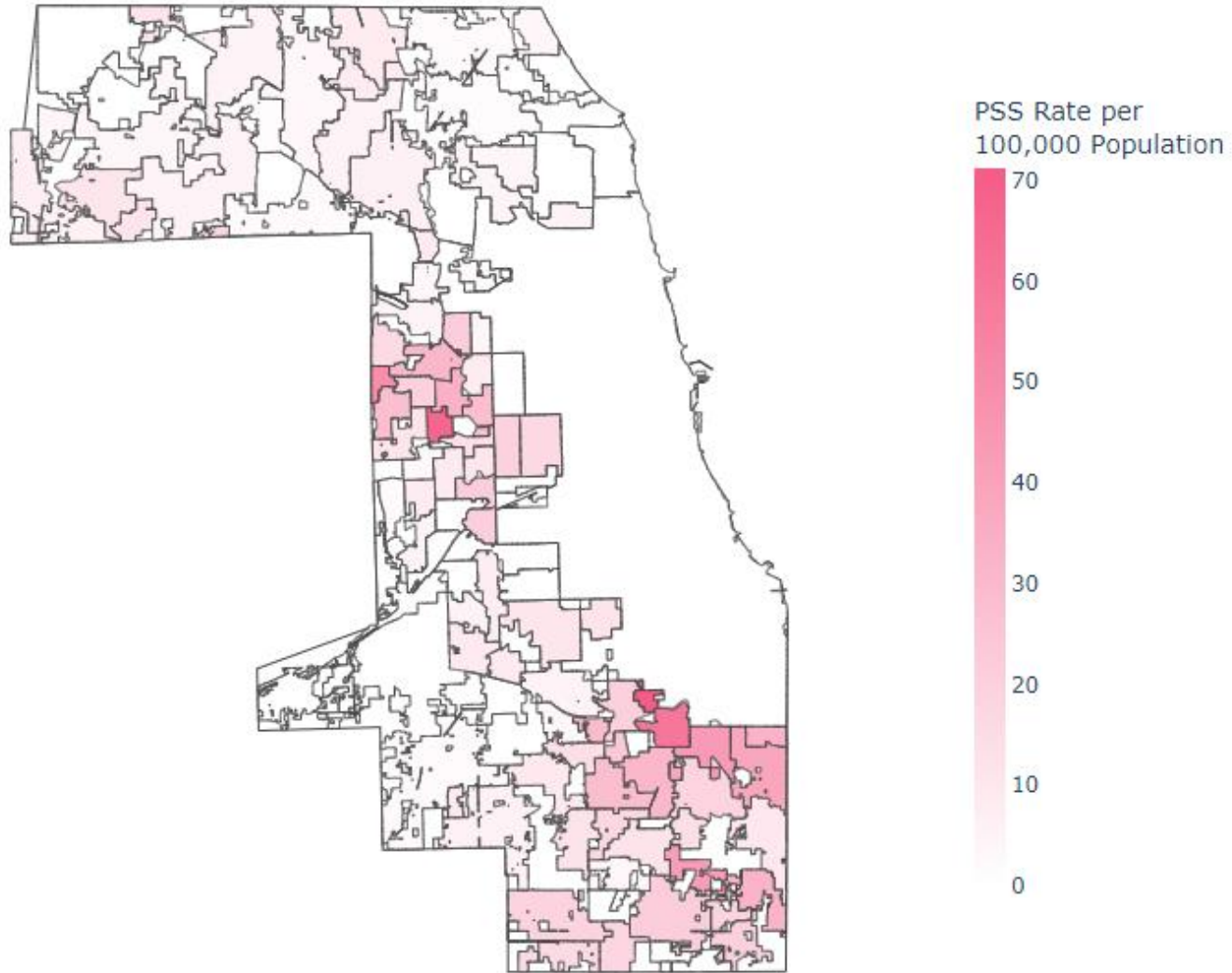
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Race/Ethnicity Data, PSS, Suburban Cook County, 2023



Geographic Distribution of PSS, 2021 -2023



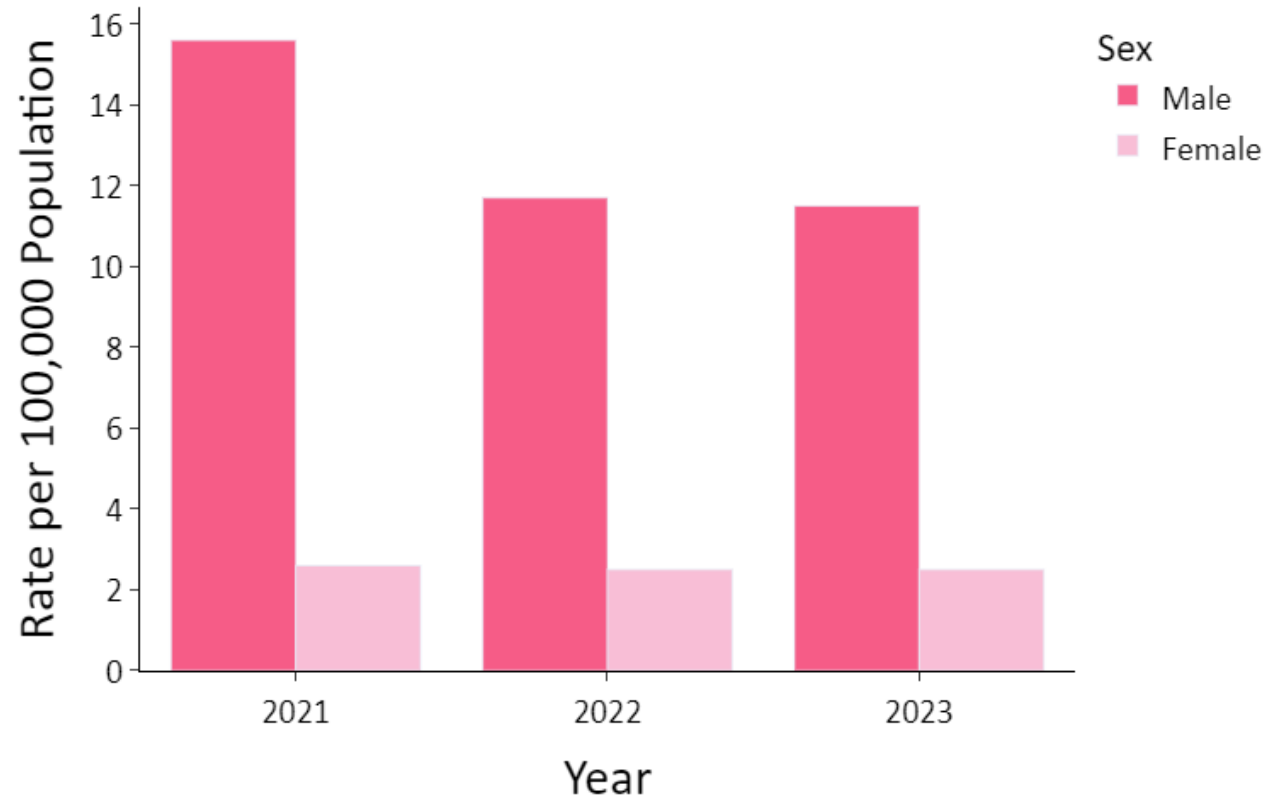
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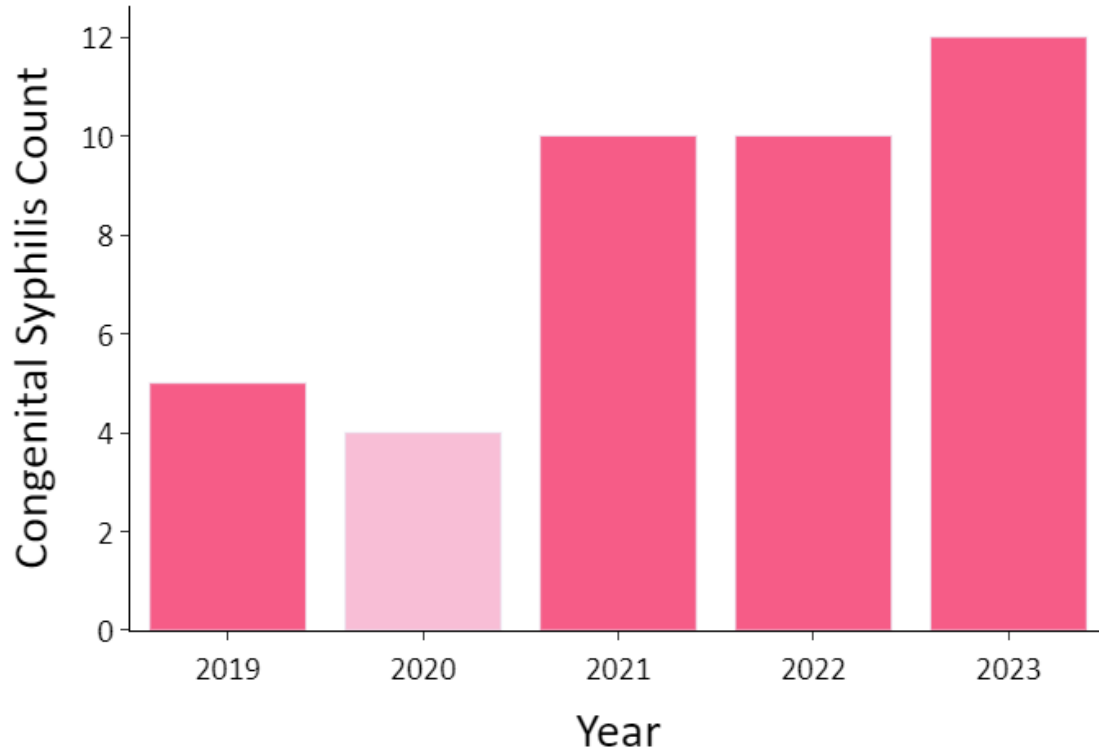
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PSS Distribution by Sex, Suburban Cook County, 2021-2023



Congenital Syphilis Counts, Suburban Cook County, 2019-2023



*Data for 2020 have been suppressed because the count is between 1 and 4.



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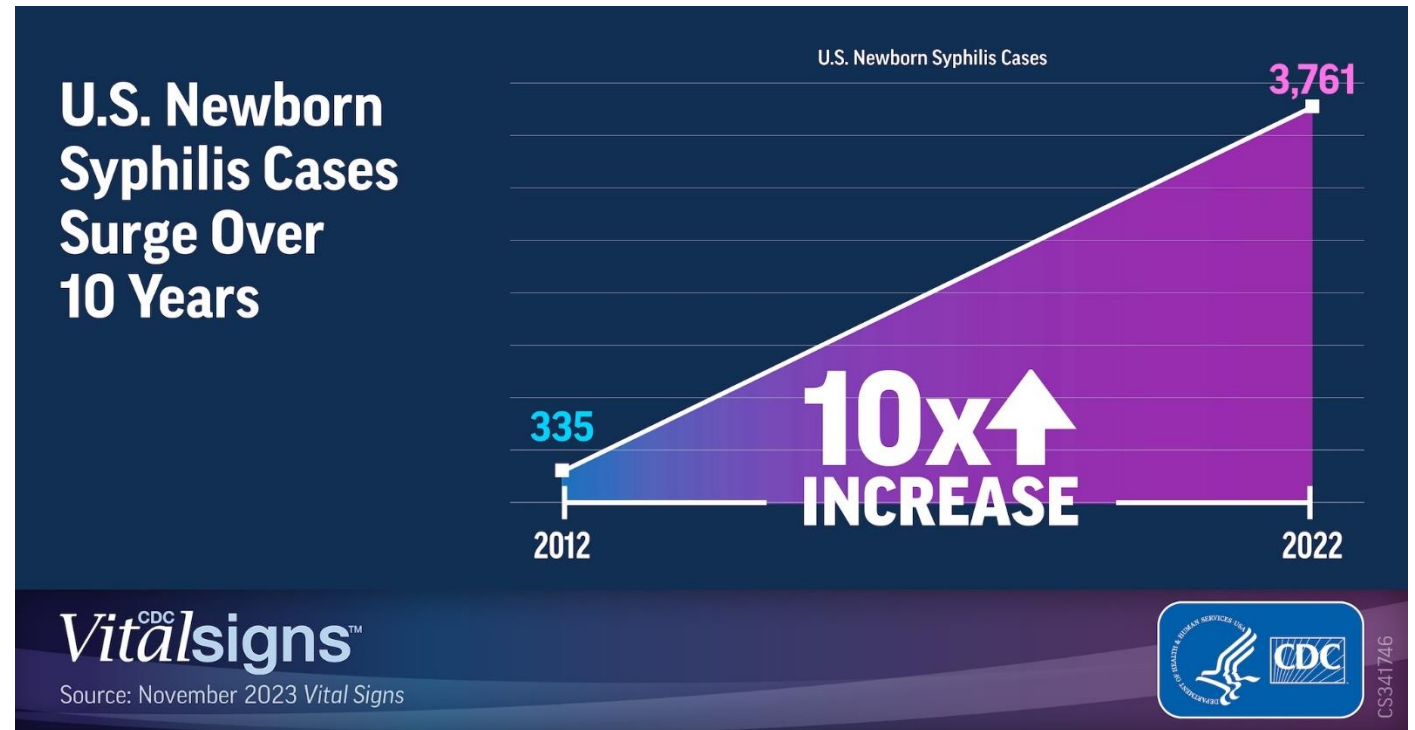
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Congenital Syphilis (CS)

According to the [CDC](#):

- 10-fold increase in cases over the past 11 years:
 - 335 US cases in 2012;
 - 3,761 cases in 2022
- In 9 out of 10 cases, congenital syphilis is preventable



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U.S. Syphilis Cases in Newborns Continue to Increase: A 10-Times Increase Over a Decade | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC

Congenital Syphilis (CS) Analysis, Suburban Cook County, 2018-2022

Of the CS cases diagnosed in CCDPH residents from 2018-2022:

- 18% had no treatment because they received no prenatal care
- An additional 54% had prenatal care, but received no treatment or inadequate treatment
- 13% due to treatment failure
- CCDPH not aware of 41% of reported CS cases until it received end-of year datasets from IDPH
- Case reports go to the health department jurisdiction where the PROVIDER operates, NOT where the client lives
- Public Health Department rely on one another to investigate



Syphilis is complex

- “Great Imitator” - Can look like other diseases
- Ordering the right tests is not always straightforward
- Interpreting labs, diagnosing, staging and treating can be complex



Syphilis: Diagnosis, Reporting and Surveillance



Syphilis reporting/surveillance is antiquated, but improvements are being implemented in 2024

Improvements:

- Was paper-based; now reporting is electronic
- Starting in summer 2024, data is in a centralized database like all other reportable conditions, helping increase access to data
 - LHDs able to “see” across jurisdictions

Remaining Challenges:

- Reporting is still done by provider location, not patient/case residence (as it is for all other reportable diseases)
- Very new – still working on full implementation



This is not an isolated problem.

- Syphilis increases have occurred across the country
- Drug shortages to treat syphilis are national issue
- CCDPH does not provide direct patient care – we must rely on our partners

**We are all in this together.
We need to get out of it together.**



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Past Syphilis Drug Shortages

Why was there a shortage?

- Surging cases across the U.S. caused surge in demand for medication used to treat syphilis
- Pfizer is sole manufacturer of Penicillin G Benzathine (aka, BIC)
- September 2024 update – standard dose now available

What's the plan in times of shortage?

- Prioritize medications for pregnant people (BIC is the only drug to be used in pregnancy)
- Use alternate regimens where possible
- FDA allowing temporary importation of Extencilline (used in Europe) to address shortage



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CCDPH Mitigations

- Working with a vendor to supply at-home test kits at no cost to sub Cook residents allowing them to get tested for:
 - Syphilis
 - Chlamydia
 - Gonorrhea
 - HIV
- Syphilis and Congenital syphilis education campaign is in market now
- Website:
 - Provider toolkit for syphilis
 - Info on medication shortage
 - Promotion of syphilis warm-line at IDPH—providers who have testing, staging, questions can call and get advice
- CCDPH STI staff consult with clients and providers routinely – outreach to clients with STI diagnoses



More Mitigations

IL law (410 ILCS 320/1) requires providers to screen pregnant individuals for syphilis infection during the **first prenatal visit** and during the third trimester (28-32 weeks' gestation).



Providers need to screen for syphilis, but patients need prenatal care to receive testing.

Barriers to receiving prenatal care:

- Access to health insurance
- Transportation
- Time off from work



STI Campaigns

Don't Guess Get a Test Campaign, 2023-24

- To raise awareness about the importance of getting tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea
- Target: Black and brown residents ages 15-24 y/o in areas w/ highest rates
- Spend: \$224K - yielded 18M impressions via social media (IG, Snapchat, TikTok), video (YouTube), digital display and out of home gym and bar bathroom mirror and stall signage.
- Dontguessgetatest.com referred to testing resources, including Color.com for mail order.
- There were an estimated 30K webpage visits and over 600 test kits were ordered



**KNOW
YOUR STATUS**

There are more than 26 million new STD cases per year.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are the two most commonly reported sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

In the past 10 years, chlamydia rates have increased by 16% and gonorrhea rates have almost doubled.

Half of all new STD infections in suburban Cook County (2021) are in people between 18 and 24 years old.



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STI Campaigns

Congenital Syphilis, 2024-25

- Target: Black and brown residents; of childbearing age (15-32); pregnant
- Spend: \$230K
- Will communicate the following messages:
 - Congenital syphilis is completely preventable
 - Signs, symptoms, complications for babies
 - The importance of prenatal care, syphilis testing and treatment
 - Resources
 - For consumers: [CCDPH website](#), CountyCare
 - For providers: IDPH Warmline, CCDPH STI program



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