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SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs) IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2015 - 2019

Health Fact Sheet No. 16 | May 2022

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PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines data on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the Mountain West as originally reported in the “STD Surveillance Report 2019” published by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).¹ This includes data for Mountain West states and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) on the following STDs: chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The CDC releases an annual publication presenting statistics and trends for STDs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis) in the United States. This fact sheet focuses on the rates of the diseases and case numbers in Mountain West states and MSAs, and the national rank provided for the states. The rankings listed in the original report ranked states base on rates of the diseases, then by case count, then in alphabetical order with the rates shown rounded to the nearest tenth. The US totals provided in the original report include cases reported by the District of Columbia but exclude territories. The CDC also reports that STDs are often asymptomatic and may not be diagnosed. Additionally, some data points may be marked with a “†.” This signifies that the jurisdiction reported cases with some variables missing, which means the reported STD rates may be incomplete. Clinical descriptions for the STDs included in the original report are reproduced for reference.²

KEY FINDINGS:

1. In 2019, Utah had the lowest rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis among Mountain West states.
2. Nevada (1st), New Mexico (2nd), and Arizona (6th) rank within the top ten states nationally for the highest rates of primary and secondary syphilis.
3. Between 2015 and 2019, the Salt Lake City, UT MSA experienced the lowest rates and cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis among Mountain West metros.
4. Between 2015 and 2019, the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA experienced the highest number of cases for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis among Mountain West metros.
5. Between 2015 and 2019, the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA most frequently experienced the highest rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis among Mountain West metros.
6. In 2019, New Mexico had the highest rates per 100,000 population for chlamydia (681.6) and gonorrhea (233.2), and the second highest rate for primary and secondary syphilis (24.4) among Mountain West states.
7. All Mountain West MSAs experienced their highest chlamydia, gonorrhea, and primary and secondary syphilis cases and rates in 2019 with one exception, the Salt Lake City, UT MSA.

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.” 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2019/technical-notes.htm>

² Case definitions used in the report can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2019/case-definitions.htm>

KEY TERMS:

Chlamydia trachomatis	“Infection with Chlamydia trachomatis may result in urethritis, epididymitis, cervicitis, acute salpingitis, or other syndromes when sexually transmitted; however, the infection is often asymptomatic in women. Perinatal infections may result in inclusion conjunctivitis and pneumonia in newborns. Other syndromes caused by C. trachomatis include lymphogranuloma venereum (see Lymphogranuloma Venereum) and trachoma.”
Gonorrhea	“A sexually transmitted infection commonly manifested by urethritis, cervicitis, proctitis, salpingitis, or pharyngitis. Infection may be asymptomatic.”
Syphilis, primary	“A stage of infection with Treponema pallidum characterized by one or more ulcerative lesions (e.g., chancre), which might differ considerably in clinical appearance.”
Syphilis, secondary	“A stage of infection caused by T. pallidum characterized by localized or diffuse mucocutaneous lesions (e.g., rash – such as non-pruritic macular, maculopapular, papular, or pustular lesions), often with generalized lymphadenopathy. Other symptoms can include mucous patches, condyloma lata, and alopecia. The primary ulcerative lesion may still be present. Because of the wide array of symptoms and signs possibly indicating secondary syphilis, serologic tests for syphilis and a physical examination are crucial to determining if a case should be classified as secondary syphilis.”

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.” 2021

Table 1 displays the rates and total number of cases of chlamydia in Mountain West states in 2019 along with the state’s national rank. New Mexico has the highest rate of chlamydia at 681.6 per 100,000 population and the 5th highest rate of chlamydia nationally. Utah has the lowest rate at 350.4 cases per 100,000 population, and ranks 46th nationally.

Table 1: Chlamydia Cases in Mountain West States, 2019

State	National Rank	Rate per 100,000 Population	Cases
New Mexico	5	681.6	14,283
Arizona	14	600.4	43,058
Nevada	17	587.5	17,827
Colorado	26	523.6	29,821
Utah	46	350.4	11,075
US TOTAL		552.8	1,808,703

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”

Table 2 displays the rates and total number of cases of gonorrhea among Mountain West states in 2019 along with the state’s national rank. New Mexico has the highest rate of gonorrhea at 233.2 per 100,000 population and ranks 11th nationally. Utah has the lowest rate at 91.3 per 100,000 population and ranks 45th nationally.

Table 2: Gonorrhea Cases in Mountain West States, 2019

State	National Rank	Rate per 100,000 Population	Cases
New Mexico	11	233.2	4,886
Nevada	15	214.8	6,519
Arizona	16	211.7	15,180
Colorado	27	168.1	9,572
Utah	45	91.3	2,886
US TOTAL		188.4	616,392

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”

Table 3 displays the rates and total number of cases of primary and secondary syphilis in Mountain West states in 2019 along with the state’s national rank. Nevada has the highest rate of primary and secondary syphilis at 26.6 per 100,000 population and ranks 1st nationally. Utah has the lowest rate at 4.4 per 100,000 population and ranks 43rd nationally.

Table 3: Primary and Secondary Syphilis Cases in Mountain West States, 2019

State	National Rank	Rate per 100,000 Population	Cases
Nevada	1	26.6	808
New Mexico	2	24.4	511
Arizona	6	18.0	1,290
Colorado	26	8.5	486
Utah	43	4.4	138
US TOTAL		11.9	38,992

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”

Table 4 shows total cases and rates of chlamydia in Mountain West MSAs for the years 2015 to 2019. Text colored red signify the metro with the highest rate in a given year. The Salt Lake City, UT MSA experienced the lowest rates and cases of chlamydia for all five years. Among Mountain West MSAs, the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA experienced the highest rates of chlamydia in 2016, 2018, and 2019. The Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA had the highest number of cases of chlamydia for all five years. All Mountain West MSAs experienced their highest chlamydia cases and rates in 2019 with one exception, the Salt Lake City, UT MSA.

Table 4: Chlamydia Cases in Mountain West MSAs, 2015-2019

Metropolitan Statistical Areas	Cases					Rates per 100,000 Population				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	13,942	14,282	15,520	16,928	17,304	495.4	500.6	537.4	577.3	590.1
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	10,049	11,362	11,898	13,695	14,044	475.2	527.1	539.8	613.7	629.3
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	21,795	23,567	26,939	28,252	30,413	476.4	505.6	568.7	581.6	626.0
Salt Lake City, UT	4,751	5,264	5,516	5,472	5,385†	406.0	443.8	458.5	447.6	440.5†

* Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”

Table 5 shows total cases and rates of gonorrhea in Mountain West MSAs for the years 2015 to 2019. Text colored red signify the metro with the highest rate in a given year. The Salt Lake City, UT MSA had the lowest rates and cases of gonorrhea for all five years documented. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA experienced the highest rates of gonorrhea in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA had the highest number of cases

of gonorrhea for all five years. All Mountain West MSAs experienced their highest gonorrhea cases and rates in 2019 with one exception, the Salt Lake City, UT MSA.

Table 5: Gonorrhea Cases in Mountain West MSAs, 2015-2019

Metropolitan Statistical Areas	Cases					Rates per 100,000 Population				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	2,838	3,848	5,408	5,270	6,359	100.8	134.9	187.2	179.7	216.9
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	2,975	3,653	4,430	5,294	5,448	140.7	169.5	201.0	237.2	244.1
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	6,495	8,086	9,433	9,448	11,317	142.0	173.5	199.1	194.5	233.0
Salt Lake City, UT	1,078	1,462	1,693	1,933	1,758†	92.1	123.3	140.7	158.1	143.8†

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”

Table 6 shows cases and rates of primary and secondary syphilis in Mountain West MSAs for the years 2015 to 2019. The Salt Lake City, UT MSA had the lowest rates and cases of primary and secondary syphilis for all five years documented. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA experienced the highest rates of primary and secondary syphilis for all five years. The Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA had the highest number of cases of primary and secondary syphilis for all five years. All Mountain West MSAs experienced their highest primary and secondary syphilis cases and rates in 2019 with one exception, the Salt Lake City, UT MSA.

Table 6: Primary and Secondary Syphilis Cases in Mountain West MSAs, 2015-2019

Metropolitan Statistical Areas	Cases					Rates per 100,000 Population				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	192	187	216	241	322	6.8	6.6	7.5	8.2	11.0
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	305	398	519	554	628	14.4	18.5	23.5	24.8	28.1
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	452	574	775	819	979	9.9	12.3	16.4	16.9	20.2
Salt Lake City, UT	49	69	87	119	86†	4.2	5.8	7.2	9.7	7.0†

*Adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019.”