

# *News from the Wyoming Department of Health*

Friday, April 12, 2013

## **Department Offers Free STD Testing Around Wyoming** April is National Sexually Transmitted Disease Awareness Month

Because regular screening for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is important to help keep many state residents healthy, the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) offers vouchers for free STD laboratory testing.

“Many people don’t realize STDs can be what we might call ‘silent,’” said Courtney Smith, field epidemiologist with the WDH Communicable Disease Unit. “In other words, it’s often difficult or even impossible for people to realize they are infected because there are no obvious symptoms. You can definitely have an STD and not know it.”

“STD infections can be quite serious. If left untreated, curable infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause complications such as pelvic inflammatory disease. The presence of STDs also increases the risk of HIV infection,” Smith continued. Smith said the sometimes “silent” nature of STDs means testing at-risk populations and quickly treating individuals with STDs and their partners are important for slowing the spread of disease.

WDH recommends routine testing for sexually active people aged 13-26 years, those with new partners in the past 60 days, pregnant women, those with multiple partners in the past 60 days and those with a history of incarceration or STDs.

Smith noted chlamydia is the most common STD in Wyoming with 2,545 infections reported in 2012, an increase of 285 over 2011. The highest infection rate occurs among teens and young adults.

WDH offers free chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and C and HIV laboratory testing and treatment for those at risk of infection. To get a voucher for free laboratory testing, visit [www.knowyo.org](http://www.knowyo.org) or text “know” to 91011. Vouchers can be printed from the website (text vouchers can be shown on phones) and taken to local clinics. A website map shows clinic locations around the state, hours of operation and contact information.

WDH also distributes condoms and educational materials to clinics across the state. To learn more about STDs in Wyoming please visit <http://www.health.wyo.gov/PHSD/std/index.html> and [www.knowyo.org](http://www.knowyo.org).

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