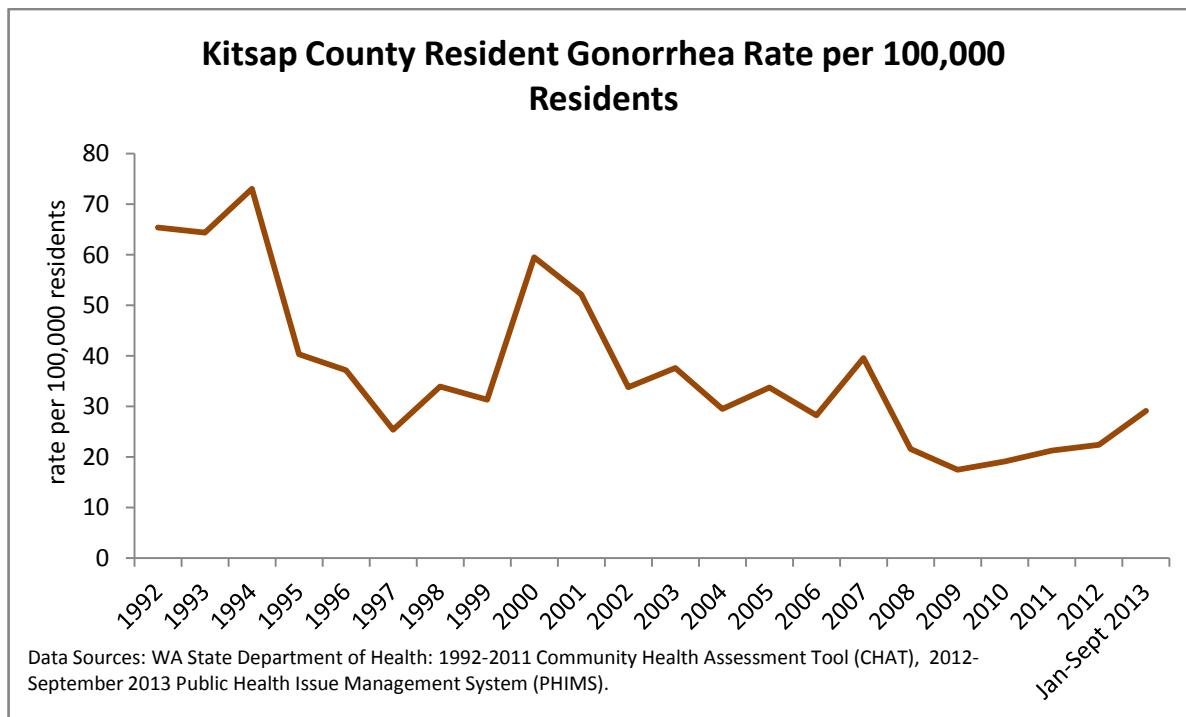


October 23, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

After years of decline in the Gonorrhea (GC) rate in Kitsap County, we have seen a small but steady increase in cases since 2009. Since July 2013, we have had a 51% increase in GC cases diagnosed in Kitsap County. Washington State has seen similar increases.

The majority of cases in Kitsap are occurring in sexually active men and women between the ages of 15 and 40. The cases are equally divided between men and women. *Our target screening efforts in Kitsap County should focus on screening all sexually active males and females 15 years and older for GC and Chlamydia (CT) (see Recommendations).*



A special recognition should go to Harrison Medical Center staff as a majority of cases are diagnosed and patients are provided Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for their sex partners through the emergency department!

Gonorrhea often has no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they may include abnormal discharge or painful urination. Due to its asymptomatic nature, particularly in women, *screening is an essential strategy to find infection*. The increase we are seeing is not likely due to antibiotic resistance, as treatment failure is uncommon. Currently, there are no completely antibiotic resistant strains in the U.S. The two frontline antibiotics available for treatment are ceftriaxone and cefixime. Azithromycin is added to prevent GC resistance as well as treat CT co-infection.

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT):

One additional tool to address GC and CT in the community is the use of Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT). EPT is provided **free** through the WA State Department of Health. *All partners of patients who test positive for GC or CT should be treated as if they are infected.* Providers should examine and treat all persons the patient had sex with in the 60 days prior to the date the patient was tested. If partner examination is not possible, patients should be given EPT to give to their sex partners. For details on how to prescribe EPT please call Beth Phipps RN at Kitsap Public Health at 360-307-4309.

Recommendations:

Screen all sexually active males **and** females 15 years and older for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia.

1. Treat all cases with Ceftriaxone 250mg IM and Azithromycin 1g or Cefixime 400mg and Azithromycin 1 g
2. Treat all sex partners with **free** Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)

For more information:

Please call 360-337-5235 if you any questions or concerns. This message will be posted on our website www.kitsappublichealth.org.

Sincerely,

Scott Lindquist MD MPH
Director of Health
Kitsap Public Health District
360-337-5237 (office)