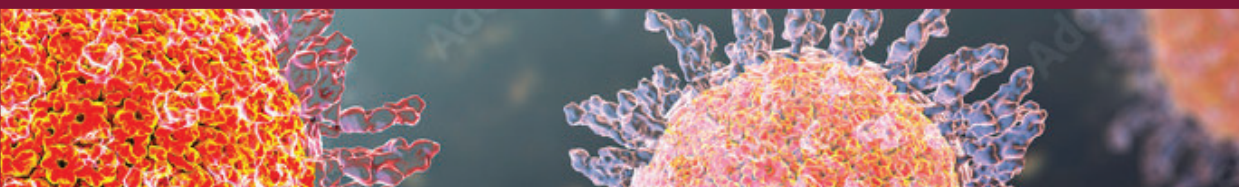


2020-21

# Sexually Transmitted Infections **Surveillance Report**

Cook County Department of Public Health  
Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit



Cook County DEPT.  
of  
**Public Health**

**BUILDING  
HEALTHIER  
COMMUNITIES**

**Copyright Information**

All materials contained in this report are in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without special permission; citation as to source, however, is appreciated.

**Suggested Citation**

Cook County Department of Public Health. *2020-2021 STI Surveillance Report*, Forest Park, IL 2023.



# Contents

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS .....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
TECHNICAL NOTES .....	20

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Trends in Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Cases, Suburban Cook County, 2012-2021 .....	7
Figure 2. Trends in Chlamydia Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021 .....	7
Figure 3. Chlamydia Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County, 2021.....	8
Figure 4. Chlamydia Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021 .....	8
Figure 5. Trends in Chlamydia Rates by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021 .....	9
Figure 6. Trends in Gonorrhea Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021 .....	11
Figure 7. Gonorrhea Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County, 2021 .....	11
Figure 8. Gonorrhea Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021 .....	12
Figure 9. Trends in Gonorrhea Rates by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021 .....	12
Figure 10. Trends in Primary and Secondary Syphilis (PSS) Rates, Suburban Cook County, 2012-2021 .....	14
Figure 11. Trends in PSS Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021 .....	14
Figure 12. Comparison of 2020 and 2021 PSS Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County.....	15
Figure 13. Comparison of PSS Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Year of Report, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021 .....	15
Figure 14. Percent of Reported PSS Cases by Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021 .....	16
Figure 15. Counts of Congenital Syphilis Cases, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.....	16
Figure 16. Trends in PSS by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.....	17



## Contents (continued)

Map 1. Chlamydia Rates (three-year averages, 2019-2021) per 100,000 Population .....	10
Map 2. Gonorrhea Rates (three-year averages, 2019-2021) per 100,000 Population.....	13
Map 3. PSS Rates (three-year averages, 2019-2021) per 100,000 Population .....	18
Table. Map Key - Municipalities in CCDPH’s Jurisdiction .....	19



## Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

**CCDPH:** Cook County Department of Public Health. Jurisdiction includes all areas in Cook County, Illinois excluding Chicago, Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie, and Stickney Township.

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**CT:** *Chlamydia trachomatis*, the bacterium that causes chlamydia.

**GC:** *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, the bacterium that causes gonorrhea.

**PSS, P&S Syphilis:** Primary or secondary syphilis; highly infectious stages of syphilis.

**STI:** Sexually Transmitted Infection. Generally, this refers to chlamydia (*Chlamydia trachomatis*), gonorrhea (*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*) or syphilis (*Treponema pallidum*) infection.



## Executive Summary

Amid increases across the U.S., the number of PSS cases rose 66% from 167 in 2020 to 277 in 2021 (Figure 8). The rates doubled in NH-Black/African-American persons, doubled in non-Hispanic Whites, and increased by 52% in Hispanic/Latinx persons (Figure 10). PSS rates are highest in west suburbs and those municipalities in the south bordering the City of Chicago (Map 3).

PSS rates increased 53% in men (sex at birth) and tripled in women (sex at birth). Congenital syphilis cases also more than doubled between 2020 and 2021.

These increases in syphilis are incredibly worrisome and must serve as a call to action. Providers of all types, especially those in immediate care settings, must have a high index of suspicion and must “Think Syphilis.” Syphilis is known as “The Great Imitator” because it can look like so many other conditions. Providers must know how to diagnose, stage and treat syphilis. Writing a prescription is not enough, often; many patients may also need additional support to receive and complete treatment, including help paying for medications in some cases.

Syphilis is preventable, treatable, and curable with the right medications given at the right time.

Chlamydia cases increased somewhat between 2020 and 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic matured, but gonorrhea cases remained more or less level. In 2021, there were:

- 11,214 chlamydia cases (492.8 per 100,000 population)
- 3,976 gonorrhea cases (174.7 per 100,000 population)

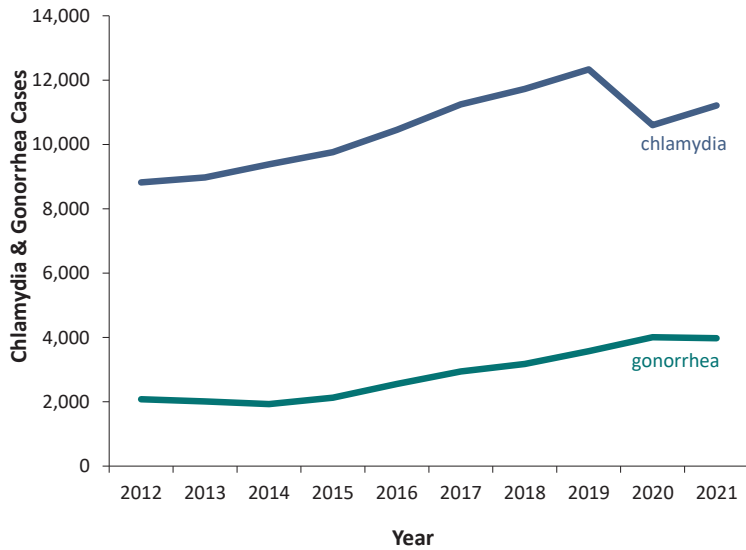
For chlamydial infections, the rate in the non-Hispanic Black/African American persons was about 13 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites. The rate in Hispanic/Latinx persons was 5.5 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites. The rate in Asian/Pacific Islanders was about 5% lower than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites (see Figure 3).

For gonorrheal infections, the race/ethnicity disparities are even greater than for chlamydia. The rate in the non-Hispanic Black/African American persons was 28 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites. The rate in Hispanic/Latinx persons was 4 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites. The rate in Asian/Pacific Islanders was about 12% lower than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites (see Figure 6).

In 2021, chlamydia and gonorrhea rates were highest in those aged 20-24 years of age (Figures 4 and 7).

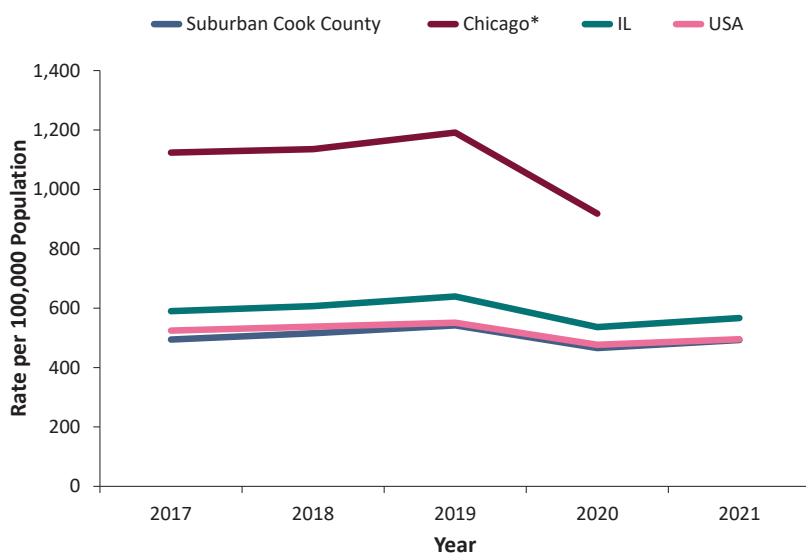
The burden of STIs/STDs in suburban Cook County remains elevated. Cases of syphilis, especially in women who are pregnant or who may become pregnant, need to be reduced in order to drive down the number of congenital syphilis cases.





**Figure 1. Trends in Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Cases, Suburban Cook County, 2012-2021.**

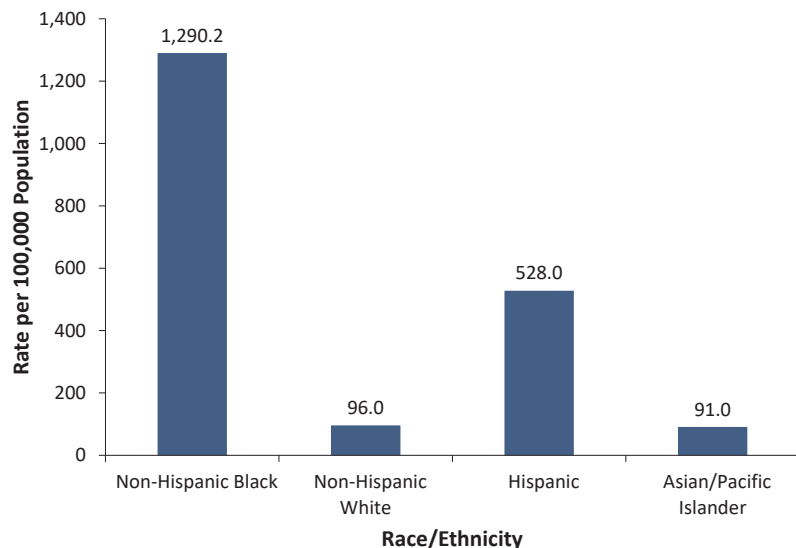
- Chlamydia case reports dropped in 2020 during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic but rose modestly in 2021.
- Gonorrhea cases continued to rise in 2020 and leveled off in 2021.



**Figure 2. Trends in Chlamydia Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021.**

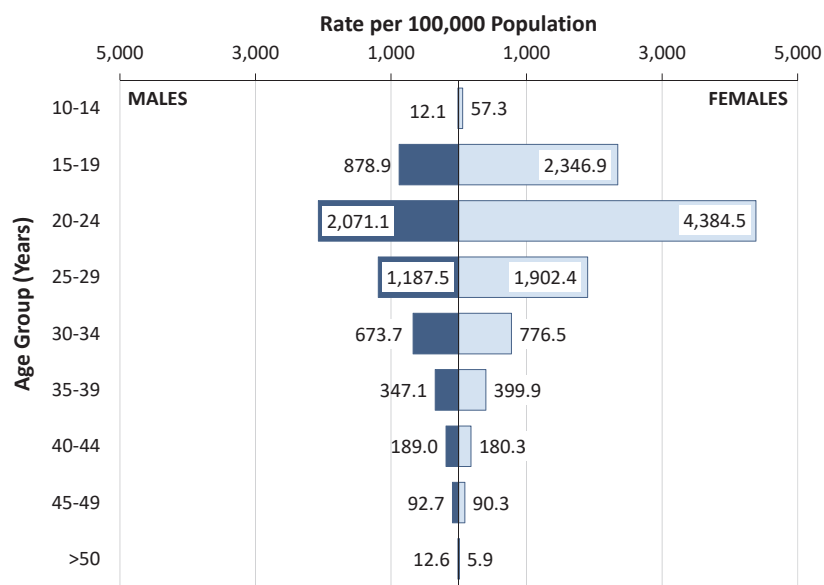
- Chlamydia rates in suburban Cook County, Illinois, and in the US dipped in 2020 and then rose slightly in 2021.
- The chlamydia rate in Chicago dipped considerably in 2020.
- Data for Chicago for 2021 was not available at the time this report was produced.

\*2021 data not available at the time this report was produced.



**Figure 3. Chlamydia Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County, 2021.**

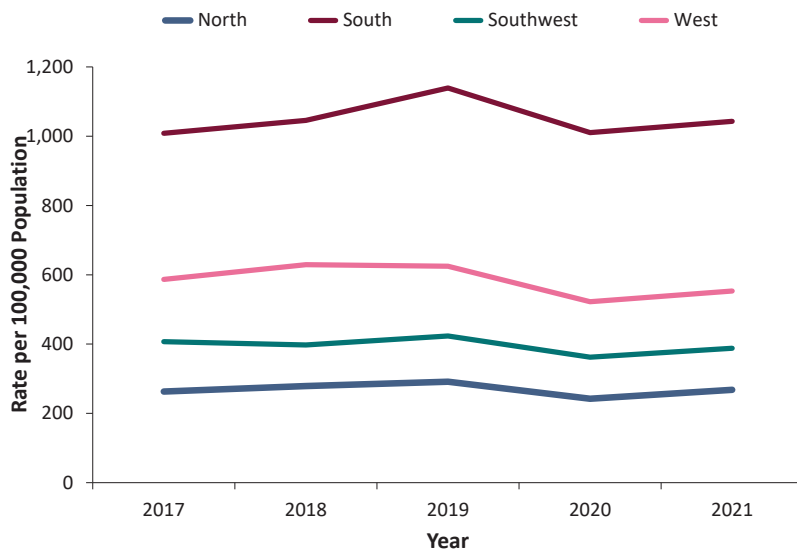
- The rate in the non-Hispanic Black/African American persons was about 13 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.
- The rate in Hispanic/Latinx persons was 5.5 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.
- The rate in Asian/Pacific Islanders was about 5% lower than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.



**Figure 4. Chlamydia Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021.**

- Chlamydial infections are concentrated in younger people, especially those aged 15-24 years of age.
- Because symptoms are not common in persons infected with chlamydia, many do not seek care.
- We believe rates are higher in women partially because they go to the doctor more often than men and get screened more often.





**Figure 5. Trends in Chlamydia Rates by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.**

- Chlamydia rates vary by Public Health District, with rates highest in the South District.
- Chlamydia rates have been relatively stable, although there has been some variation year-to-year, especially between 2019-2020, with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Attention Providers!

Please fax completed morbidity report forms to:  
(708) 836-5450

You may receive a fax if certain information on a reported cases is missing, like race/ethnicity and/or treatment. It is important to provide this information as soon as possible.

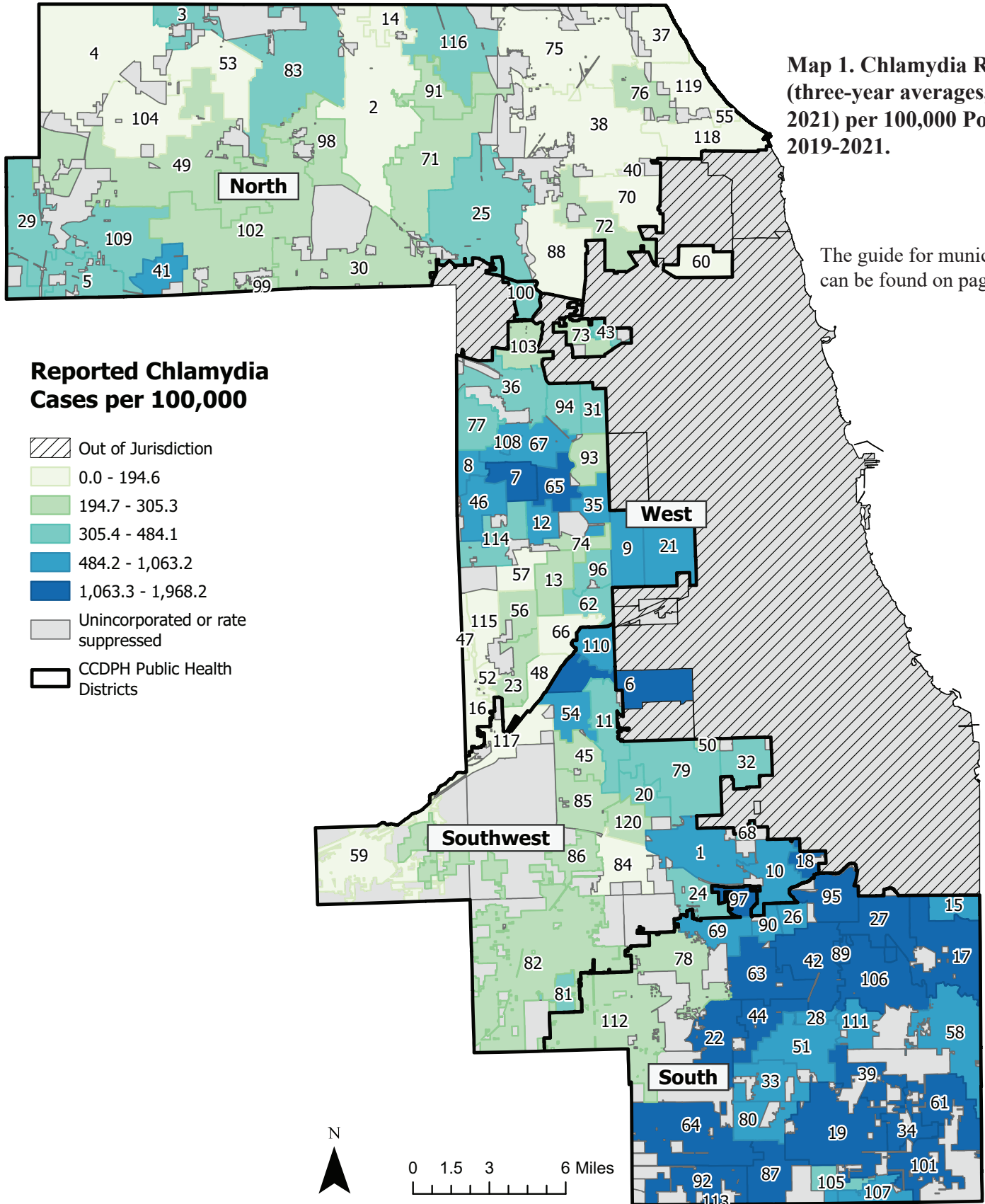
Staff may also reach out to ask for additional information such as symptoms, reason for visit, history of syphilis (including past labs), and possibly other questions (i.e. HIV status and pregnancy).

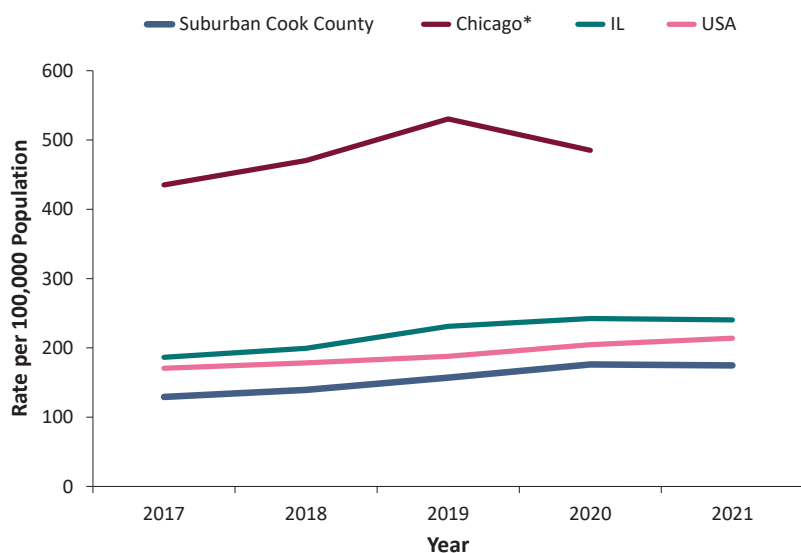
If you have any questions, please contact our STI Surveillance Coordinator:

Cerese Depardieu  
(708) 836-5456

[cerese.depardieu@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:cerese.depardieu@cookcountyhhs.org)



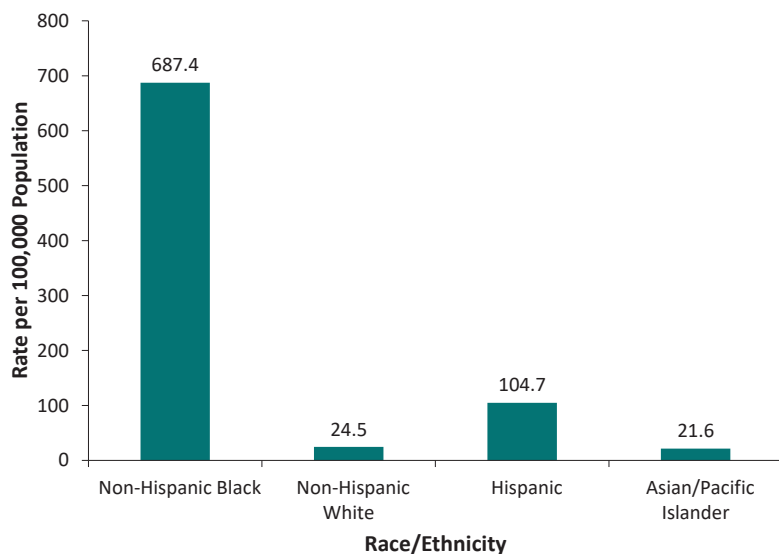




\*2021 data not available at the time this report was produced.

**Figure 6. Trends in Gonorrhea Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021.**

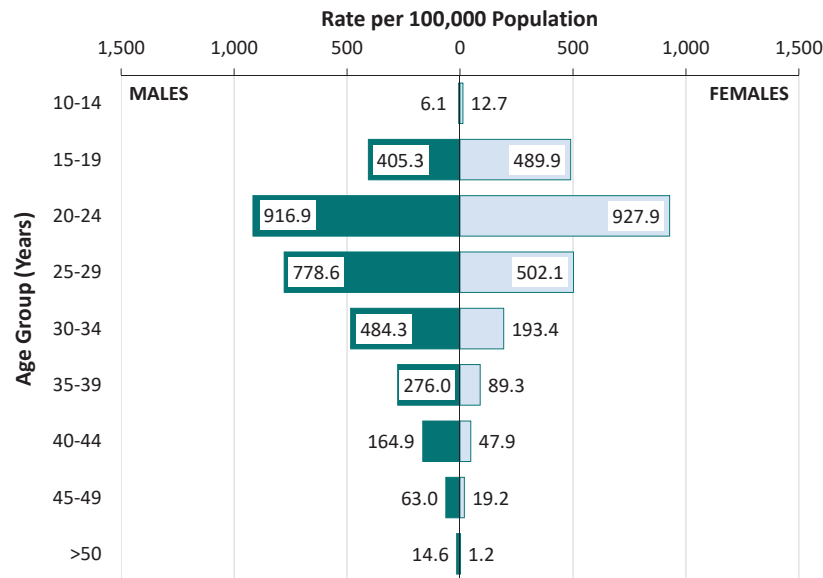
- Gonorrhea rates increased locally, state-wide and nationally over the last 5 years, though in CCDPH’s jurisdiction, rates were roughly equal in 2020 and 2021.
- Gonorrhea cases rose slightly in the US overall between 2020 and 2021, but cases were almost equal in Illinois over that time.
- Gonorrhea data for 2021 from Chicago was not available at the time this report was produced.



**Figure 7. Gonorrhea Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County, 2021.**

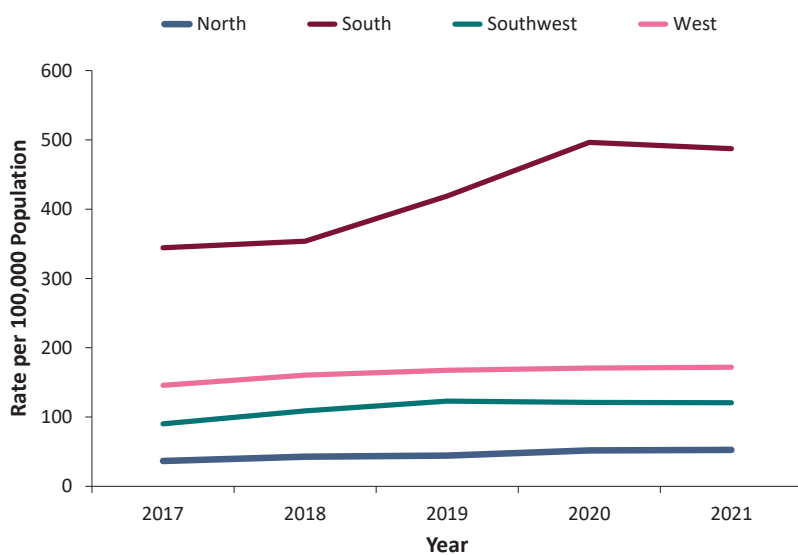
- The rate in the non-Hispanic Black/African American persons was 28 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.
- The rate in Hispanic/Latinx persons was 4 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.
- The rate in Asian/Pacific Islanders was about 12% lower than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites.





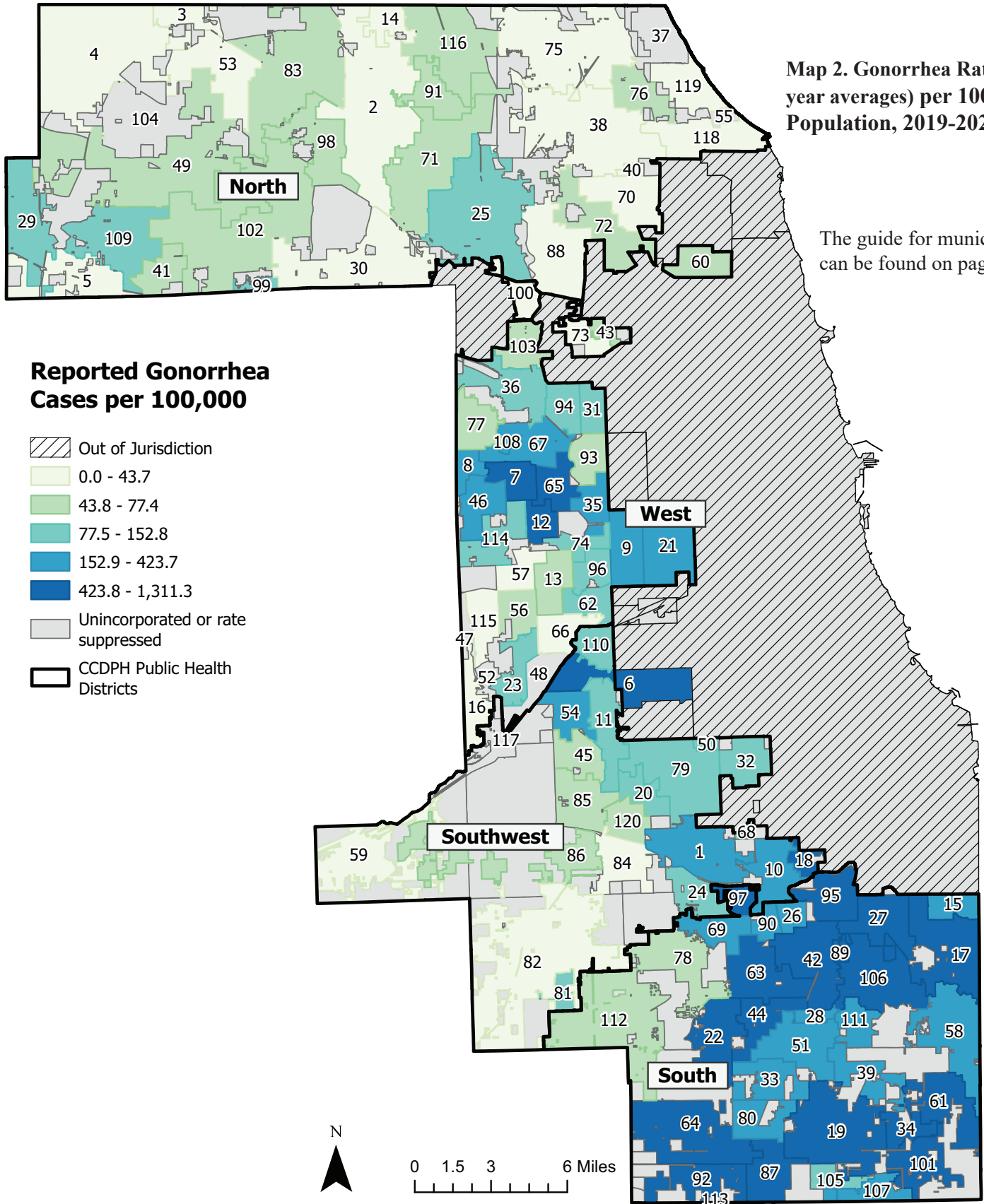
**Figure 8. Gonorrhea Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021.**

- Gonorrhea rates are highest (and nearly even) in both males and females aged 20-24 years.
- Gonorrhea rates are higher in men over 24 years of age compared to women, but all rates decrease in older age groups.



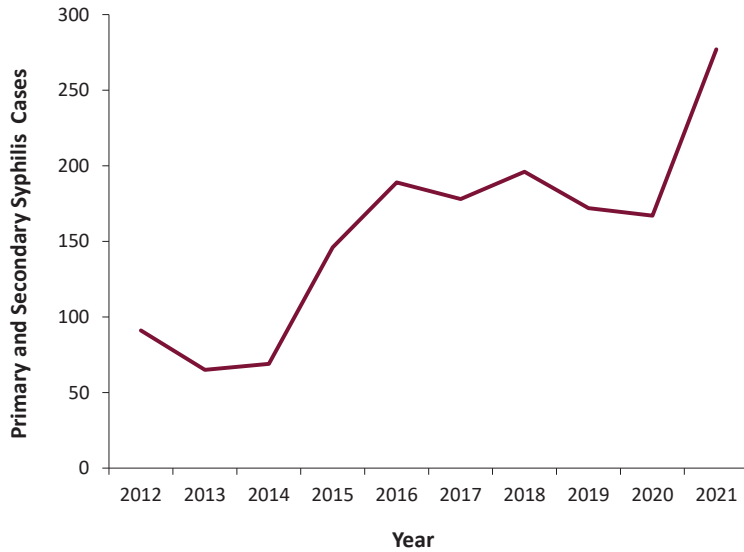
**Figure 9. Trends in Gonorrhea Rates by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.**

- Gonorrhea rates are highest in the South District.
- In the South District, there was a notable increase between 2018-2020.
- Rates in the West, Southwest, and North Districts all increased slightly between 2017-2021.



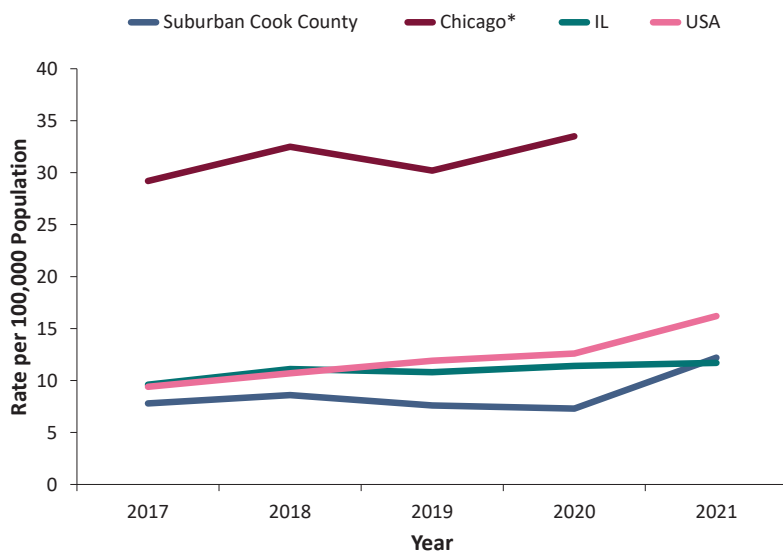
**Map 2. Gonorrhea Rates (three-year averages) per 100,000 Population, 2019-2021.**

The guide for municipalities can be found on page 19.



**Figure 10. Trends in Primary and Secondary Syphilis (PSS) Rates, Suburban Cook County, 2012-2021.**

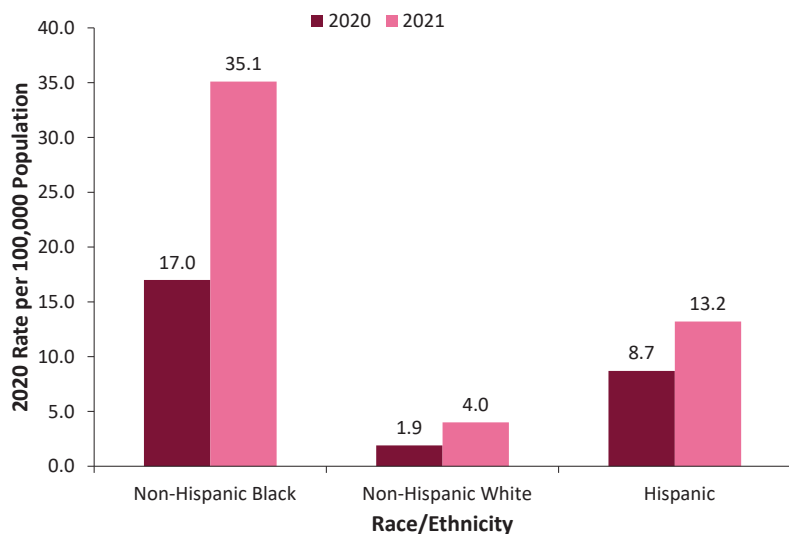
- Primary and secondary syphilis (PSS) cases increased 66% between 2020 and 2021.
- There were 167 reported PSS cases in 2020 and 277 in 2021.



\*2021 data not available at the time this report was produced.

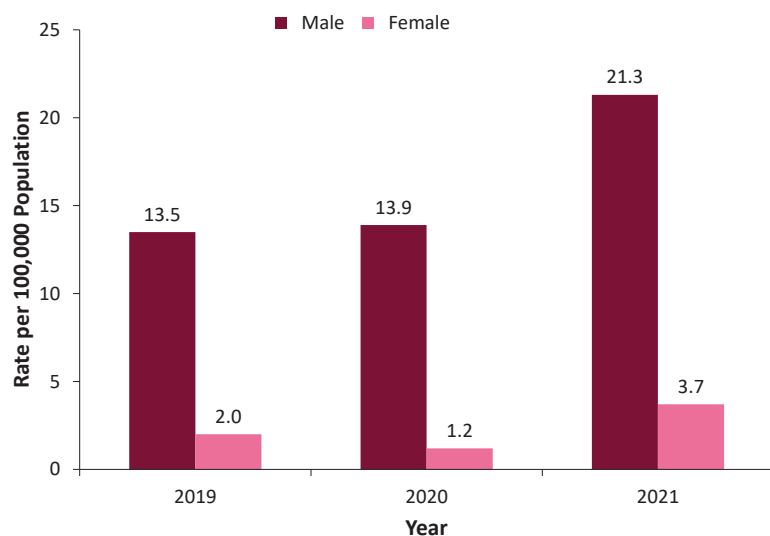
**Figure 11. Trends in PSS Rates by Select Public Health Jurisdictions, 2017-2021.**

- PSS rates rose considerably in suburban Cook County and in the US overall between 2020 and 2021.
- PSS cases rose only slightly in Illinois between 2020 and 2021.
- PSS data for 2021 from Chicago was not available at the time this report was produced.



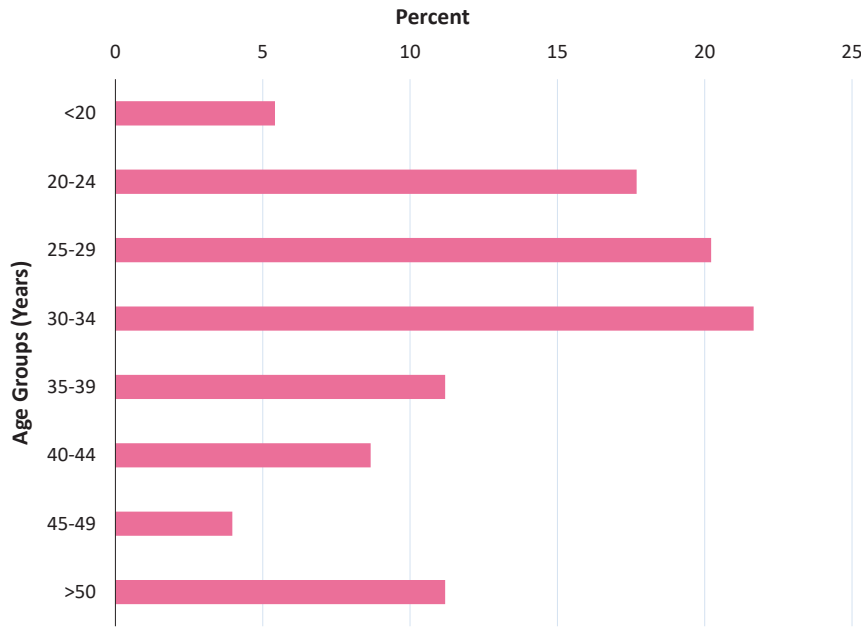
**Figure 12. Comparison of 2020 and 2021 PSS Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County.**

- PSS rates doubled for the non-Hispanic Black/African American and non-Hispanic White populations between 2020 and 2021.
- PSS rates increased 52% in the Hispanic/Latinx population over the same period.
- The 2021 PSS rate in non-Hispanic Blacks was 9 times higher than the rate in non-Hispanic Whites, and about 2.7 times the rate in the Hispanic/Latinx population.



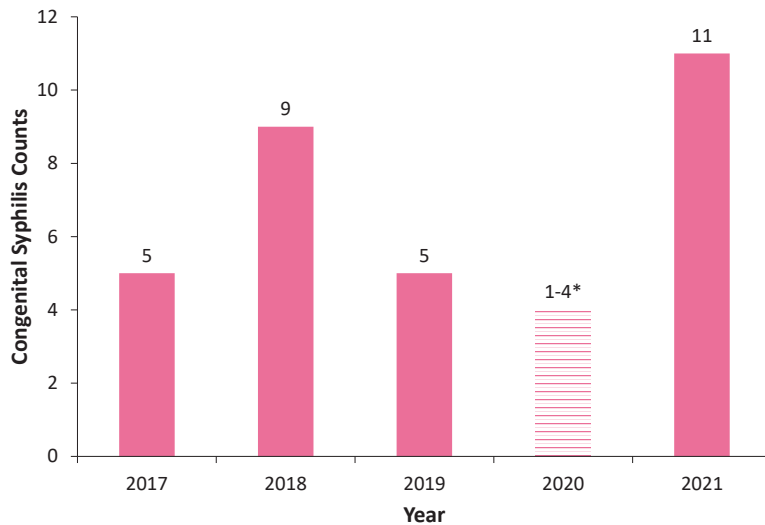
**Figure 13. Comparison of PSS Rates by Sex (at Birth) and Year of Report, Suburban Cook County, 2019-2021.**

- The 2021 PSS rate in women (sex at birth) tripled compared to the 2020 rate.
- In men (sex at birth), the rate increased 53% over the same period.



**Figure 14. Percent of Reported PSS Cases by Age Group, Suburban Cook County, 2021.**

- Most PSS cases (60%) are aged 20-34 years, with the largest proportion aged 30-34 years.

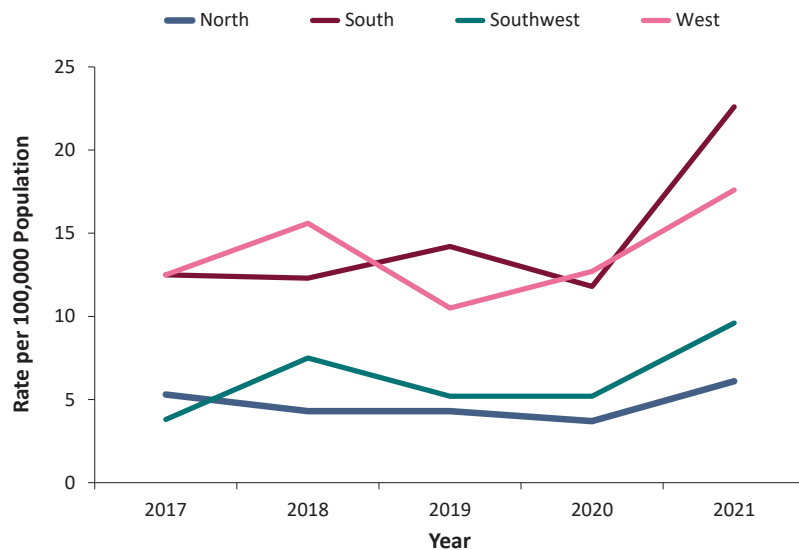


**Figure 15. Counts of Congenital Syphilis Cases, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.**

- Congenital syphilis cases more than doubled, rising from fewer than 5 in 2019 to 11 in 2021.

\*Counts between 1-4 suppressed to protect confidentiality.





**Figure 16. Trends in PSS by Public Health District, Suburban Cook County, 2017-2021.**

- Rates of PSS increased in all Public Health Districts between 2020-2021, but the rate increased the most in the South District.
- PSS rates in the West and the South have been higher than rates in the North and Southwest.

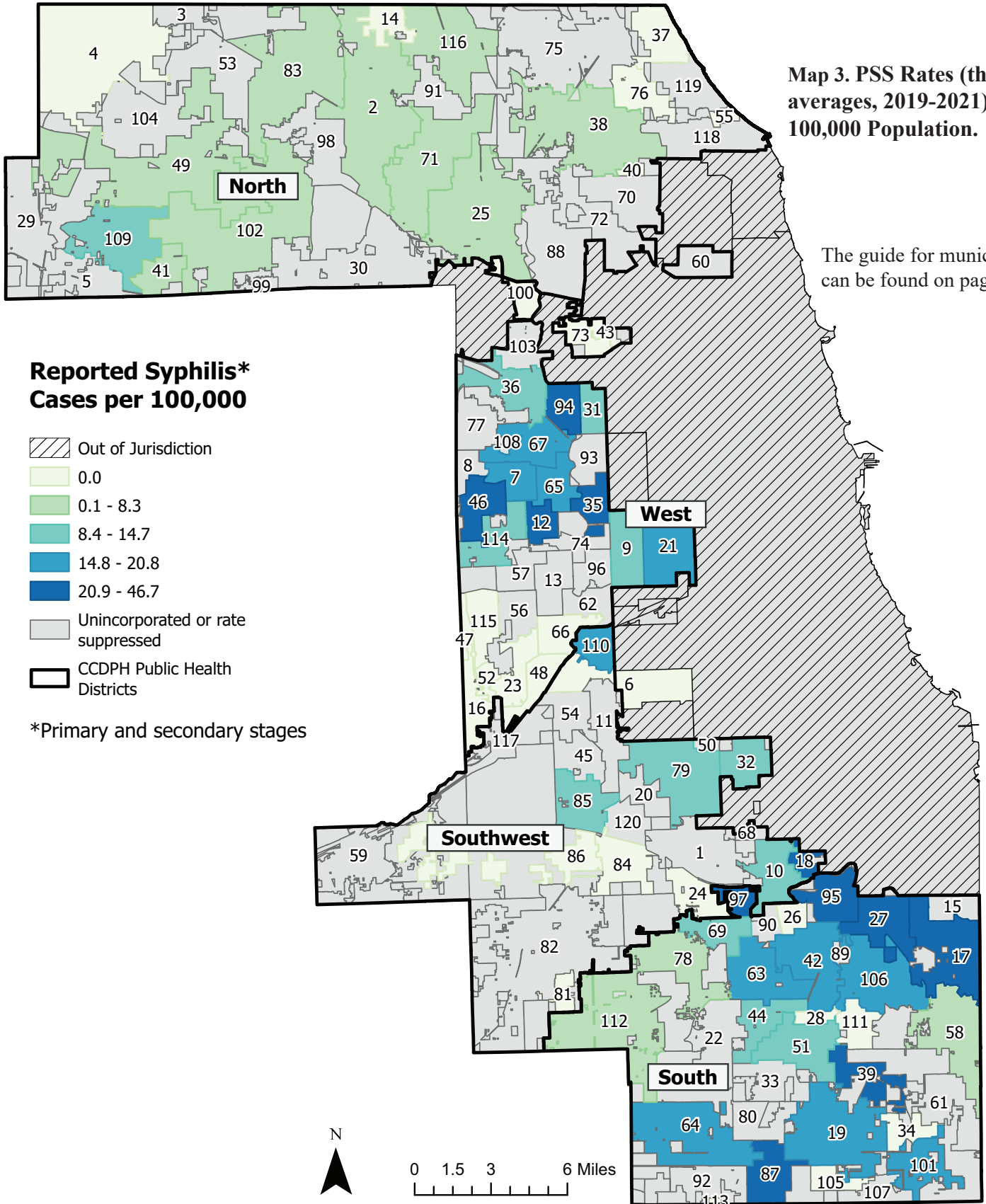
## Attention Providers!

Are you providing **Expedited Partner Therapy** to your patients, also known as **EPT**?

Why not?!! It's not only **legal** in Illinois, **EPT is highly encouraged!**

[Click here](#) for more information on **EPT**.













**Map 3. PSS Rates (three-year averages, 2019-2021) per 100,000 Population.**

The guide for municipalities can be found on page 19.

**Reported Syphilis\*  
Cases per 100,000**

-  Out of Jurisdiction
-  0.0
-  0.1 - 8.3
-  8.4 - 14.7
-  14.8 - 20.8
-  20.9 - 46.7
-  Unincorporated or rate suppressed
-  CCDPH Public Health Districts

\*Primary and secondary stages



Table. Map Key - Municipalities in CCDPH's Jurisdiction

Label	Municipality	District	Label	Municipality	District	Label	Municipality	District
1	Alsip	SW	41	Hanover Park	N	81	Orland Hills	SW
2	Arlington Heights	N	42	Harvey	S	82	Orland Park	SW
3	Barrington	N	43	Harwood Heights	W	83	Palatine	N
4	Barrington Hills	N	44	Hazel Crest	S	84	Palos Heights	SW
5	Bartlett	N	45	Hickory Hills	SW	85	Palos Hills	SW
6	Bedford Park	SW	46	Hillside	W	86	Palos Park	SW
7	Bellwood	W	47	Hinsdale	W	87	Park Forest	S
8	Berkeley	W	48	Hodgkins	W	88	Park Ridge	N
9	Berwyn	W	49	Hoffman Estates	N	89	Phoenix	S
10	Blue Island	SW	50	Hometown	SW	90	Posen	S
11	Bridgeview	SW	51	Homewood	S	91	Prospect Heights	N
12	Broadview	W	52	Indian Head Park	W	92	Richton Park	S
13	Brookfield	W	53	Inverness	N	93	River Forest	W
14	Buffalo Grove	N	54	Justice	SW	94	River Grove	W
15	Burnham	S	55	Kenilworth	N	95	Riverdale	S
16	Burr Ridge	W	56	La Grange	W	96	Riverside	W
17	Calumet City	S	57	La Grange Park	W	97	Robbins	S
18	Calumet Park	SW	58	Lansing	S	98	Rolling Meadows	N
19	Chicago Heights	S	59	Lemont	SW	99	Roselle	N
20	Chicago Ridge	SW	60	Lincolnwood	N	100	Rosemont	W
21	Cicero	W	61	Lynwood	S	101	Sauk Village	S
22	Country Club Hills	S	62	Lyons	W	102	Schaumburg	N
23	Countryside	W	63	Markham	S	103	Schiller Park	W
24	Crestwood	SW	64	Matteson	S	104	South Barrington	N
25	Des Plaines	N	65	Maywood	W	105	South Chicago Heights	S
26	Dixmoor	S	66	McCook	W	106	South Holland	S
27	Dolton	S	67	Melrose Park	W	107	Steger	S
28	East Hazel Crest	S	68	Merrionette Park	SW	108	Stone Park	W
29	Elgin	N	69	Midlothian	S	109	Streamwood	N
30	Elk Grove Village	N	70	Morton Grove	N	110	Summit	SW
31	Elmwood Park	W	71	Mount Prospect	N	111	Thornton	S
32	Evergreen Park	SW	72	Niles	N	112	Tinley Park	S
33	Flossmoor	S	73	Norridge	W	113	University Park	S
34	Ford Heights	S	74	North Riverside	W	114	Wchester	W
35	Forest Park	W	75	Nbrook	N	115	Wern Springs	W
36	Franklin Park	W	76	Nfield	N	116	Wheeling	N
37	Glencoe	N	77	Nlake	W	117	Willow Springs	SW
38	Glenview	N	78	Oak Forest	S	118	Wilmette	N
39	Glenwood	S	79	Oak Lawn	SW	119	Winnetka	N
40	Golf	N	80	Olympia Fields	S	120	Worth	SW



## Technical Notes

### Cook County Department of Public Health Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the Cook County Department of Public Health excludes Chicago, Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie and Stickney Township, each of which has its own state-certified local health department. We have also intentionally omitted municipalities or portions with 0 population or with so few residents that calculating rates is impractical.

### Data Methodology

Healthcare providers and laboratories within suburban Cook County are required by law to report positive cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis to the Cook County Department of Public Health within 7 days of diagnosis. The case reports are entered into a secure database hosted by the Illinois Department of Public Health, providing the basis for the information presented in this report.

### Data Limitations

This report includes all reported cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis but does not represent the entire population of person infected. This is because not all infected persons have been tested or reported. Additionally, persons with asymptomatic STIs, such as chlamydia, may be underrepresented in surveillance reports because they may not seek care, may remain undiagnosed, and, consequently, are unreported.

