

SYPHILIS

DATA BRIEF

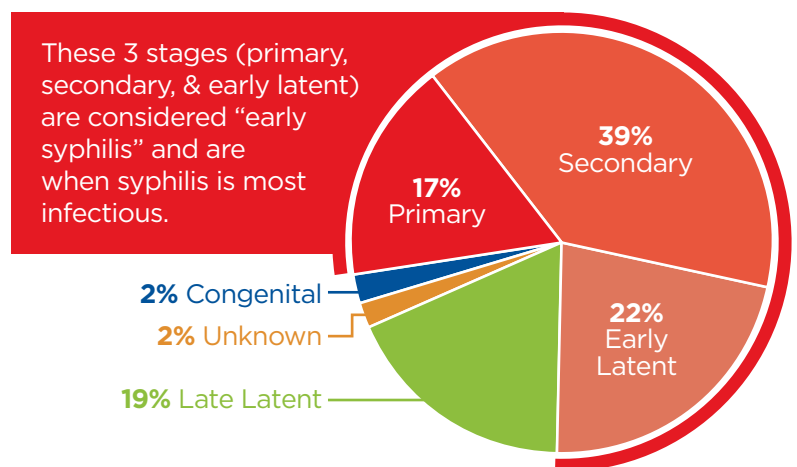
FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO
2013-2015

This brief summarizes 2013-2015 infectious syphilis (also known as “early syphilis”) in Franklin County, OH. The data are based on local syphilis case reports from a variety of private and public sources. The brief provides important insights into the scope, distribution, and trends of early syphilis in Franklin County.

The Columbus community is experiencing an outbreak of early, infectious syphilis.

Syphilis is highly contagious through vaginal, anal and oral sex. This infection, which can cause serious health problems if untreated, is on a troubling upswing across the Franklin county area. Local rates are 3 times higher than Ohio overall.

2013-2015 Distribution of Syphilis Cases by Diagnosis (N=1,125)

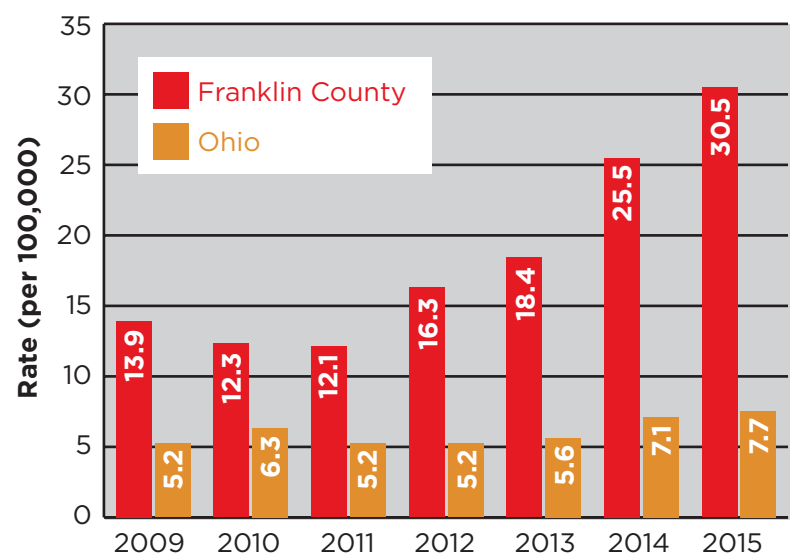


Screening Recommendations*

- All pregnant women should be screened for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, 28 weeks gestation, and at delivery.
- All HIV positive individuals & MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) should be screened for syphilis at least every 3 to 6 months.
- Anyone seeking sexual-related health services should be screened for syphilis at time of service encounter.

*Based on CDC's Screening Recommendations

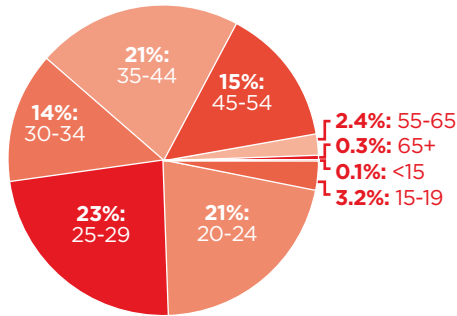
Franklin County & Ohio Early Syphilis Rates by Year



EARLY SYPHILIS DEMOGRAPHICS N=884

AGE

Early Syphilis Cases by Age



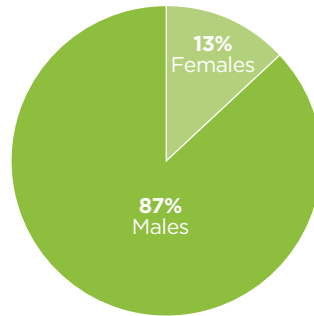
Age Difference Between Races: Black syphilis cases tend to be younger than white syphilis cases.

28 Median Age for Black Cases

36 Median Age for White Cases

SEX

Early Syphilis Cases by Sex



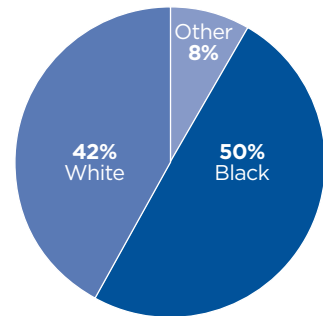
Sex Disparity:

For every 1 female with syphilis, 7 males have it.



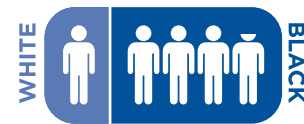
RACE

Early Syphilis Cases by Race



Racial Disparity:

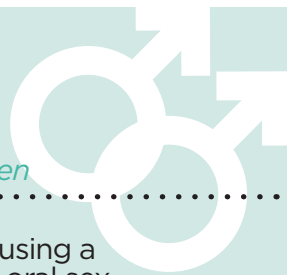
For every 1 white person with syphilis, 3.9 black people have it.



Ethnicity Note: Hispanics (of any race) represent 5% of early syphilis cases.

A Closer Look at MSM CASES

MSM = Men who have Sex with Men



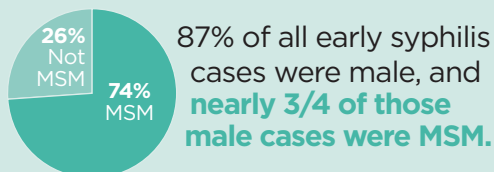
88% reported never using a condom during oral sex.

52% reported having sex with an anonymous partner.

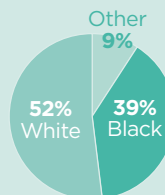
49% reported having sex with a partner they met online.

62% were also HIV positive.

Male Early Syphilis Cases



MSM Early Syphilis Cases by Race



A Closer Look at FEMALE CASES



19 Congenital Cases

diagnosed between 2013-2015. Congenital syphilis is often severe, disabling, and life-threatening.

98% Increase in Female Cases

Females represented the largest increase in syphilis cases between 2013 and 2014 at 98% (compared to an increase of 31% among males).

8x Higher Rates Among Black Females

Black females have a disproportionately higher rate than white females - for every 1 white female with syphilis, 8 black females have it.

EARLY SYPHILIS RISK FACTORS N=884

HIV COINFECTION

45% of all cases  **51%** of all male cases  **4%** of all female cases

% of cases who were also HIV positive

STI HISTORY

59% of all cases  **61%** of all male cases  **45%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported having a prior history of an STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection)

INTERNET SEX PARTNER

34% of all cases  **38%** of all male cases  **6%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported having sex with someone they met online in the last 12 months

ANONYMOUS SEX PARTNER

43% of all cases  **46%** of all male cases  **20%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported having sex with an anonymous person in the last 12 months

SEX WHILE INTOXICATED

52% of all cases  **54%** of all male cases  **44%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported having sex while intoxicated or high on drugs in the last 12 months

SEX FOR DRUGS OR MONEY

7% of all cases  **6%** of all male cases  **13%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported exchanging sex for drugs or money in the last 12 months

CONDOMS & ORAL SEX

82% of all cases  **83%** of all male cases  **79%** of all female cases

% of cases who reported never using condoms during oral sex

MSM (Men who have Sex with Men)

 **74%** of all male cases  **2%** of all female cases

% of cases reported being MSM

% of cases reported having sex with an MSM

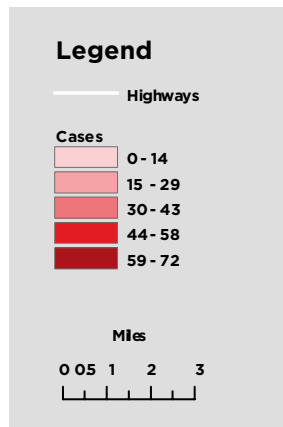
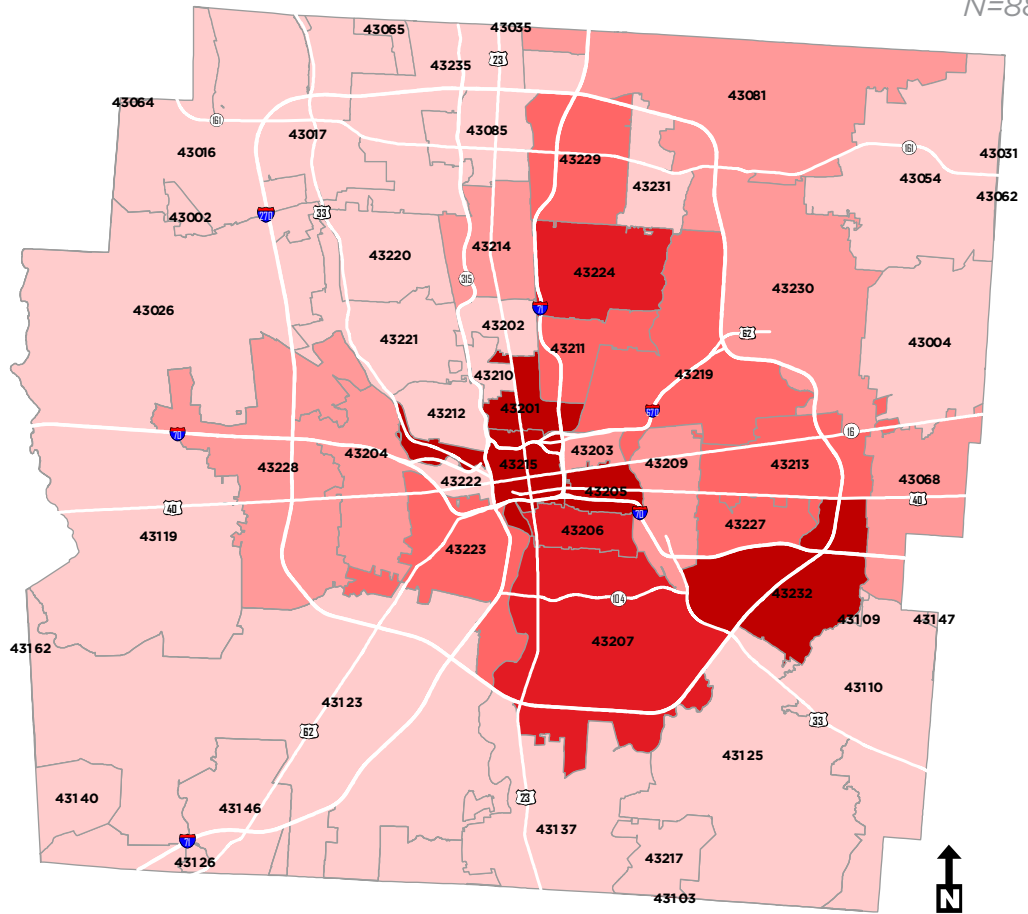
EARLY SYPHILIS CASES BY ZIP CODE

N=884

Franklin County, Ohio,
January 1, 2013 -
December 31, 2015

(ZIP code of residence
when diagnosed)

More than 28%
of syphilis cases were
found in just 4 ZIP
codes: 43201, 43205,
43215 & 43232.



PUBLIC HEALTH IN ACTION



- **Disseminated local data, guidelines and strategies** to health care providers throughout the region.
- **Developed and shared sexual health promotion messaging** towards highest risk communities via social media, radio, and print.
- **Increased prevention services efforts** to assure that all persons who screen positive for syphilis receive the treatment and education needed.
- **Increased screening efforts**, particularly in communities with the highest rates of syphilis, such as men who have sex with men.
- **Prioritized treatment appointments** to be sure that all clients and their sexual partners receive treatment, including preventive treatment.

ABOUT THE DATA: All current and historical figures are preliminary and subject to change as new/updated information is received. Current and preliminary syphilis data (2015 and after) are downloaded from the Ohio Disease Reporting System. Analysis is completed by the Office of Epidemiology at Columbus Public Health. Current population data are provided by the American Community Survey.

A NOTE ABOUT OUR TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY: We acknowledge that transgendered and gender non-conforming individuals are also impacted by syphilis. Efforts are being made to improve data collection and data quality to ensure the data represent all persons so that their needs are met accordingly.

DEFINITIONS:

Early syphilis - a probable or confirmed diagnosis of primary, secondary or early latent syphilis.

Congenital syphilis - a disease that occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during pregnancy.

Race - Self-identified regardless of ethnicity. "Other" race includes multiracial.

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