Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Surveillance Network (SSuN) Project

Frequently Asked Questions
2024 – 2029

What is SSuN?

The Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Surveillance Network (SSuN) is a national collaborative project that was established in 2005 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve the capacity of national, state and local STI programs to detect, monitor and respond to STIs through enhanced data collection, reporting and analysis.

The goal of SSuN is to:
- Provide enhanced behavioral, demographic and clinical information on gonorrhea and adult syphilis cases reported to state and local health departments.
- Provide information on patients presenting for care in specialty STI clinical settings.
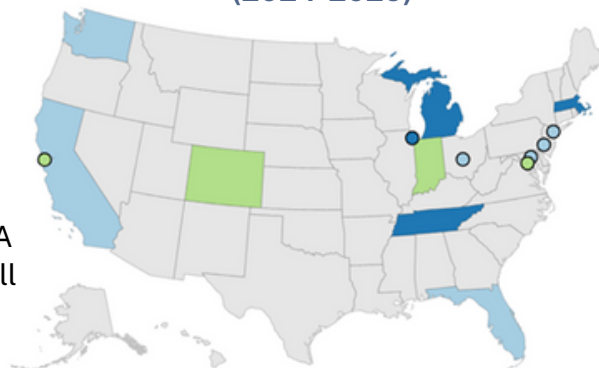- Explore innovative strategies to improve STI surveillance nationwide.

Which health departments are participating?

There are currently 12 states and health departments participating in this project including the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of HIV and STI Programs (BHSP).

Currently Funded SSuN Cycle 5 Collaborators (2024-2029)

Who is included in this study?

This project includes persons diagnosed and reported with gonorrhea and adult syphilis throughout the calendar year. A random sample is conducted to determine which persons will be included for further evaluation which includes medical record abstraction and an interview with the recipient.

What information is collected?

SSuN collects information about various demographic, behavioral and clinical information on gonorrhea and adult syphilis cases reported to state and local health departments. This information will be collected through medical record abstraction and a recipient interview conducted by BHSP Surveillance staff.

Information abstracted includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Testing and treatment.
- STI diagnosis history and screenings.
- Health care visit.
- Demographics such as race, gender and city of residence.
- Type of provider in which recipient received care.

Information ascertained during the interview includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Symptoms and treatment information.
- Sexual history including questions related to previous partners.
- HIV testing and prevention history.
- Preventive services such as education and prescriptions of doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy PEP), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and mpox vaccinations.

Why do you need to look at my patient's medical records?

Analysis of patient data through medical record abstraction is critical to understanding the changing STI exposure patterns and trends and will further help detect emergent and re-emergent infections. Information from the medical records assists assessing gonorrhea and syphilis treatment, testing and quality of care at local and national levels.

How will the information collected be used?

SSuN data will be used for improving STI health care on a state and national level. Data from SSuN will contribute to STI/HIV prevention and control programs, inform local and national STI policymaking, increase the understanding of the populations being diagnosed with STIs and trends in persons seeking STI clinical services, guide other national STI surveillance projects, and contribute to strengthening human resources and technical infrastructure for state and local STI surveillance. Findings are routinely published in surveillance and medical reports and presented to community groups and at national conferences.

How will the data be secured?

SSuN values the principles embodied in patient-level protections and strives to establish and maintain the highest level of performance in protecting the confidentiality and security of all information. All public health data will be maintained in a secure environment and transmitted through secure methods. No individual identifiers, including patient or provider names and addresses, are sent to the CDC, nor will they be released in any reports.

SSuN Staff

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To learn more about how SSuN works, visit CDC.gov/sti/php/projects/ssun.html.

MDHHS | Bureau of HIV and STI Programs
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services