

Connections

From the Director of the National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP)

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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For my final 2021 edition of Connections, I want to tell you about [What Works in Schools](#), a CDC funded program making a positive impact. This school-based health prevention program works with local school districts to:

- provide quality health education,
- connect students to [health services](#), and
- establish [safe and supportive school environments](#).

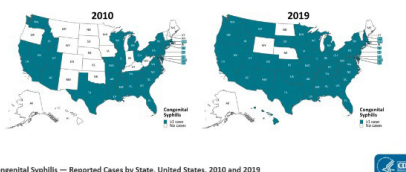
A recent study, [published in The Journal of Adolescent Health](#), shows that the program is associated with reducing a wide range of health risk behaviors and experiences in adolescents. Findings show that students in schools that implemented the program were less likely to have ever had sex, have four or more lifetime sexual partners, or be currently sexually active. After two years of implementation of the program, these students were 13% less likely to miss school because of safety concerns, 24% less likely to experience forced sex, 11% less likely to ever use marijuana, and 23% less likely to currently use marijuana compared to students in schools that did not implement the program.

Implementation of these strategies shows great promise in improving the health of all students. Currently, the program reaches about 2 million students in [28 large school districts](#) at a [cost of less than \\$10 per student](#).

Congenital Syphilis: Preliminary 2020 Data

[Preliminary CDC data](#) show nearly 2,100 cases of newborn syphilis in 2020. This is a five-fold increase since 2012 – and rates are increasing across the country. In a [New England Journal of Medicine correspondence](#), Dr. Virginia B. Bowen, an epidemiologist in CDC, and her coauthors call attention to continued increases in this preventable infection and underscore the value of testing and treating people who are pregnant for preventing congenital syphilis.

Over the last decade, congenital syphilis has diffused across the nation. By 2019, 43 states and D.C. reported at least one case.



Estimates Reveal Decline in Hepatitis C Treatment 2015-2020

CDC's [first estimates](#) on hepatitis C treatment initiation show the number of people who initiated treatment in the United States declined from 2015 to 2020.

The study found more than 843,000 initiated curative hepatitis C treatment during this time. This is far short of the 260,000 people that need to be treated annually to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030, as estimated by the [National Academies of Science and Medicine in 2015](#). CDC [estimates](#) about 2.4 million people lived with hepatitis C in the United States between 2013-2016. Check out our recent [Dear Colleague letter](#) for other study highlights.

New from CDC

[HIV Cluster Detection and Response in Action: Stories from the Field](#)

[Reported Tuberculosis in the United States, 2020](#)

TB patient education materials are now available in [Dari](#) and [Pashto](#)

[Tuberculosis Epidemiologic Studies Consortium III \(TBESC-III\)](#)

Upcoming Events

[December 1: World AIDS Day](#)

[December 2-3: United States Conference on HIV/AIDS \(virtual\)](#)

On the Web

[Three Notices of Funding Opportunities \(NOFO\): Submissions Due by January 25, 2022 From HRSA Focusing on HIV and Aging](#)

