

Syphilis in Women and Babies: 2017 Snapshot for California

SYPHILIS IN WOMEN AND BABIES

Syphilis, when transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or delivery, can be devastating. **Congenital syphilis** can cause premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects, blindness, hearing loss, and even death. Mother to child transmission can occur at any state of syphilis infection. Prenatal screening and prompt treatment for pregnant women is essential for preventing these devastating birth outcomes.

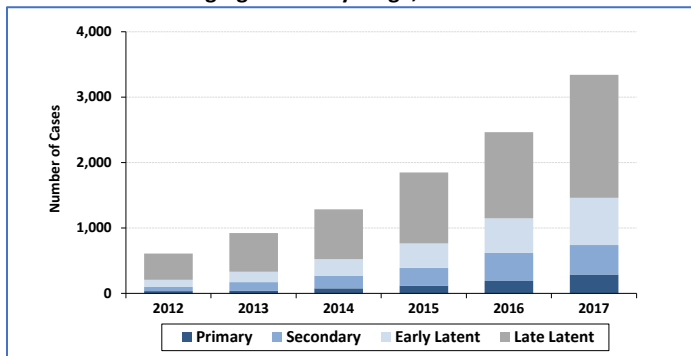
Syphilis in childbearing age females:

- In 2017, 3,342 females of childbearing age (15-44 years) were diagnosed with syphilis in California
- Nearly half of these cases (1,462) were early syphilis, which includes the infectious primary and secondary stages as well as the early latent stage
- In 2017, early syphilis among females of childbearing age was 18.5 per 100,000, which was an increase of over 600% compared to the rate in 2012
- About 15-20% of women with syphilis were reported as pregnant

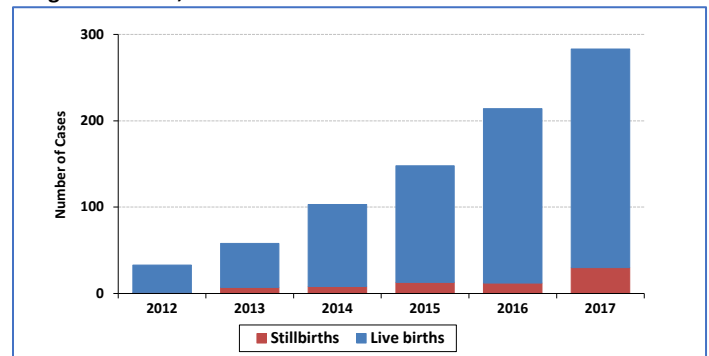
Congenital syphilis:

- In 2017, 283 babies with congenital syphilis were reported, including 30 stillbirths
- 2017 was the 5th consecutive year for increases in the number of infants born with congenital syphilis
- Congenital syphilis burden of this magnitude last observed in 1995, over 20 years ago
- 27 of 58 counties had 1 or more congenital syphilis cases in 2017 compared with only 14 counties in 2012

Females Childbearing Age Cases by Stage, 2012–2017

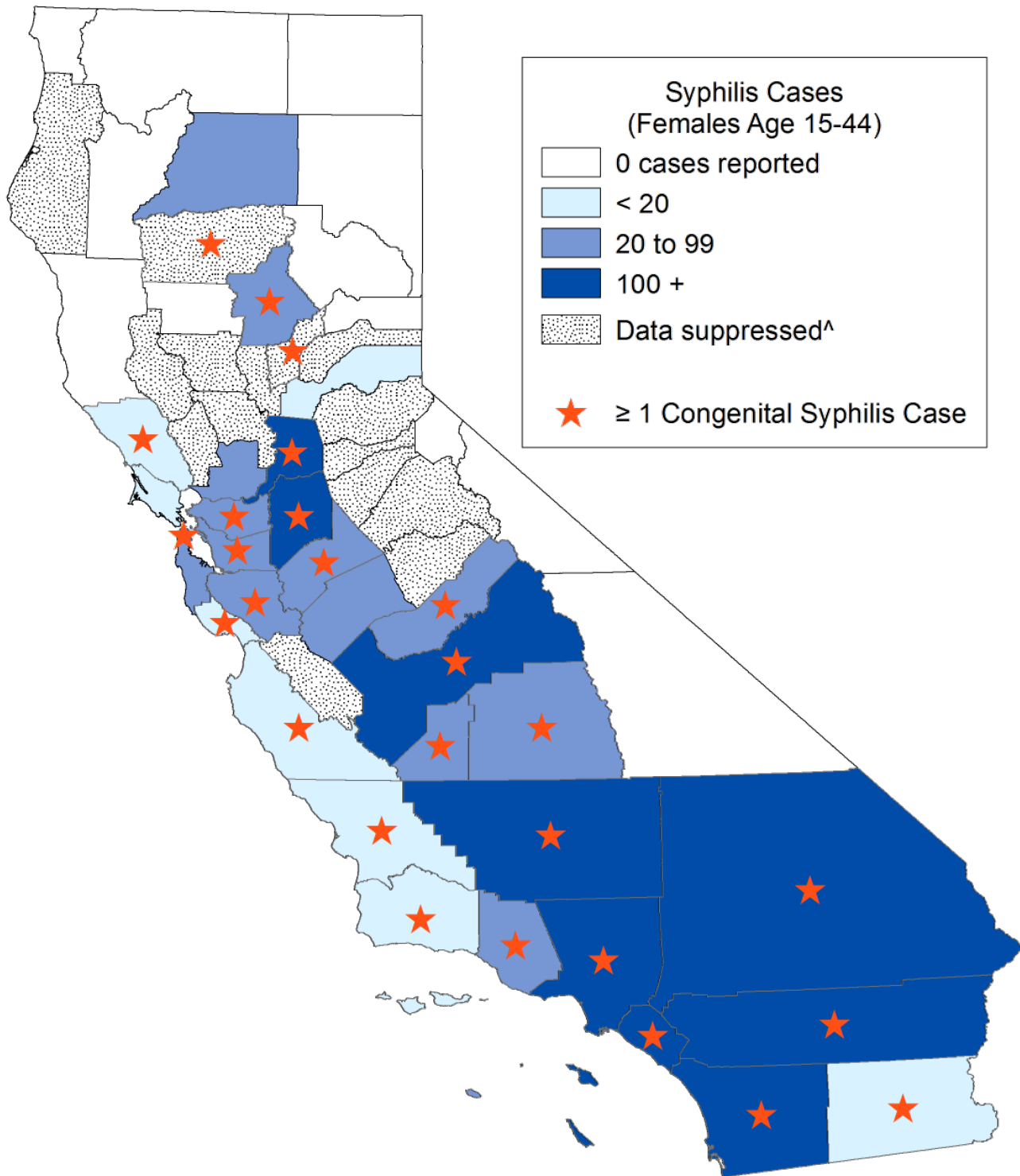


Congenital Cases, 2012–2017



- In California, it is required by law that pregnant women get tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit.
- Early diagnosis and prompt treatment in pregnancy prevented 70% of potential congenital syphilis cases in 2017.

Syphilis Cases (all stages) among Females of Childbearing Age and Congenital Syphilis, 2017



[^] Data suppressed for 15 counties as per CHHS Data De-Identification Guidelines, accounting for 1.7% of cases.