

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Take Charge This Sexual Health Awareness Month**

*GTCHD offers free or low-cost reproductive and sexual health services*

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) is recognizing September as Sexual Health Awareness Month. The initiative aims to raise awareness about sexual health issues, promote safe sex practices, and encourage open conversations about sexual well-being.

“Sexual health plays an important role in overall well-being,” said Jacalyn Money-Bruno, GTCHD Director of Prevention and Community Health. “Anyone who is sexually active, especially with new or multiple partners, or without protection, should consider getting tested.”

Quick facts from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#):

- Over 2.4 million cases of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia were diagnosed and reported in the United States in 2023.
- The CDC estimates that 1 in 5 Americans has a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Young people aged 15-24 account for nearly half of all new cases of STIs each year in the United States.

GTCHD offers free and low-cost reproductive and sexual health services to individuals ages 12 and up. Michigan law allows teens to receive some services without parental consent. The clinic has compassionate nurse practitioners and registered nurses who provide a range of services.

- **STI Testing:** Early detection and treatment of STIs are essential to prevent transmission and complications. The GTCHD can test for hepatitis C and B, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Depending on the type of STI, samples may be collected from urine, a blood draw, or a swab.
- **Vaccination:** Vaccines are a highly effective way to prevent certain diseases. The GTCHD offers vaccinations for hepatitis A and B, Mpox, and HPV vaccines. For hepatitis treatment, clients are referred to their healthcare provider.
- **HIV Testing:** Regular testing promotes a safe and respectful environment in relationships. GTCHD offers HIV testing.
- **Condoms:** Condoms are a simple yet powerful tool in reducing the spread of STIs, including HIV. They are also 98% effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly. The GTCHD offers free condoms to anyone, with no appointment necessary.
- **Birth Control:** The GTCHD offers several different types of birth control options. Our providers will help guide clients through the process of choosing the one that fits their lifestyle.

The GTCHD prioritizes privacy with confidential testing, results, and treatments for sexual health. To learn more about the GTCHD services, visit the website [www.gtcountymi.gov/581/Reproductive-Sexual-Health](http://www.gtcountymi.gov/581/Reproductive-Sexual-Health) or call 231-995-6111. The GTCHD accepts insurance and offers a sliding fee scale for the uninsured, including Medicaid.

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