



HIV, STI & TB BULLETIN

Vol.2 Issue. 2, February 2019

HIV, STI, and TB Programme of the Ministry of Health, Samoa



SURVEILLANCE UPDATE ON HIV, STI'S AND TB 2019

Samoa continues to face high rates of STI's, but good progress has been made in increasing the coverage of HIV & STI testing, which is crucial to detecting cases, treating them, and preventing further transmission. More work remains to be done, but MoH and partners are committed.

CURRENT HIV AND STI CASES DETECTED...

More cases are being detected, which means more people are linked to treatment and care. However the challenge remains in preventing new infections. For the first time since 2012, new cases of HIV (2) have been detected, and these patients have begun treatment. Chlamydia continues to increase especially in people ages 15-24 (males higher than females). Syphilis continues to rise.

Percent of People Testing Positive 2017 & 2018

STI	2017 Jan-Dec	2018 Jan-Dec	Comments
Chlamydia	22.93%	23.70%	Increase
Gonorrhoea	10.00%	5.45%	Decrease (with increase in testing)
Hepatitis A	14.60%	14.80%	No significant change
Hepatitis B	2.44%	1.92%	Decrease
Hepatitis C	0.10%	0.08%	Decrease
HIV	0.00%	0.03%	Increase (2 new cases detected due to improved screening and outreach)
Syphilis	0.68%	1.11%	Increase (significant for Syphilis rates)

*Data reported by NHS Laboratory Services, represents all specimens tested nationally

** Figures represent diagnostic testing only, not rapid screening test kits

MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION OF SYPHILIS CASES DETECTED

The transmission of syphilis from a mother to infant during pregnancy is a serious, disabling and often life threatening infection for newborns. Treatment has to occur before birth in order for infants to have the best chances of survival, which means mothers have to be tested and linked to treatment before delivery. This is why antenatal check-up blood screenings are so important.

As overall syphilis rates increase across the country, congenital syphilis infections among infants are also rising. There were two new confirmed infections, exactly as forecasted for 2018.

Estimated Congenital Syphilis Cases for 2018*	Infants Born with Congenital Syphilis 2018 (confirmed)
2	2

*WHO Congenital Syphilis Estimation Tool (Heath, Hill, & Taylor, 2018)

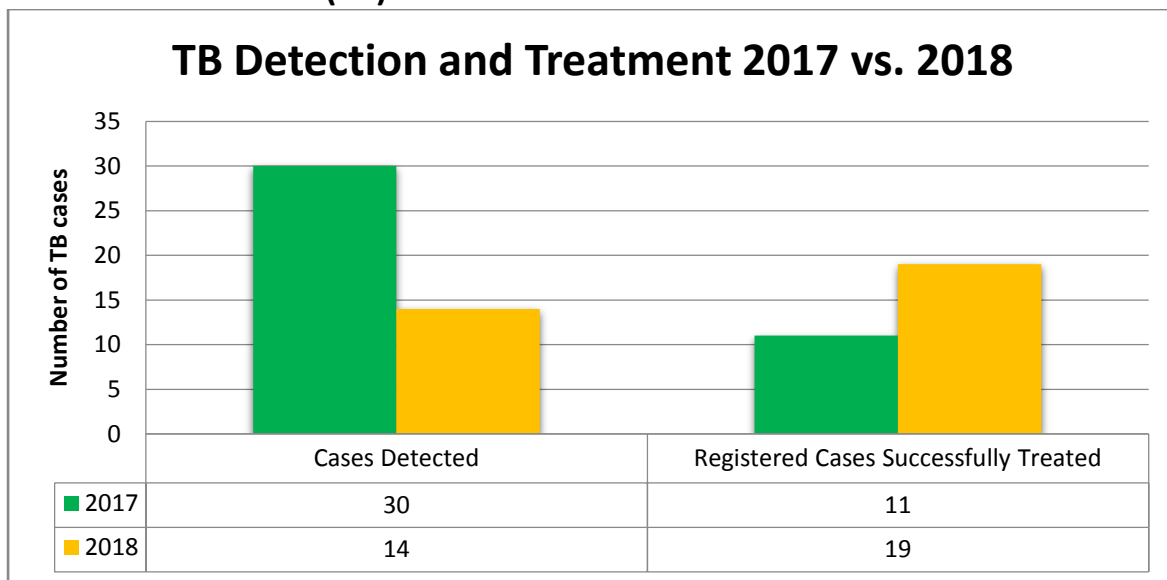
** Data reported by NHS Laboratory Services, represents all specimens tested nationally

This reaffirms the need to continue strengthening antenatal care programs and increasing voluntary testing for the general population. Early detection is critical for all people, but especially so with pregnant women to prevent congenital syphilis.

For more information about Antenatal Testing Services please contact the Hospital and Clinical Services at 21212, or Samoa Family Health Association at 26929.



CURRENT TUBERCULOSIS (TB) CASES DETECTED...

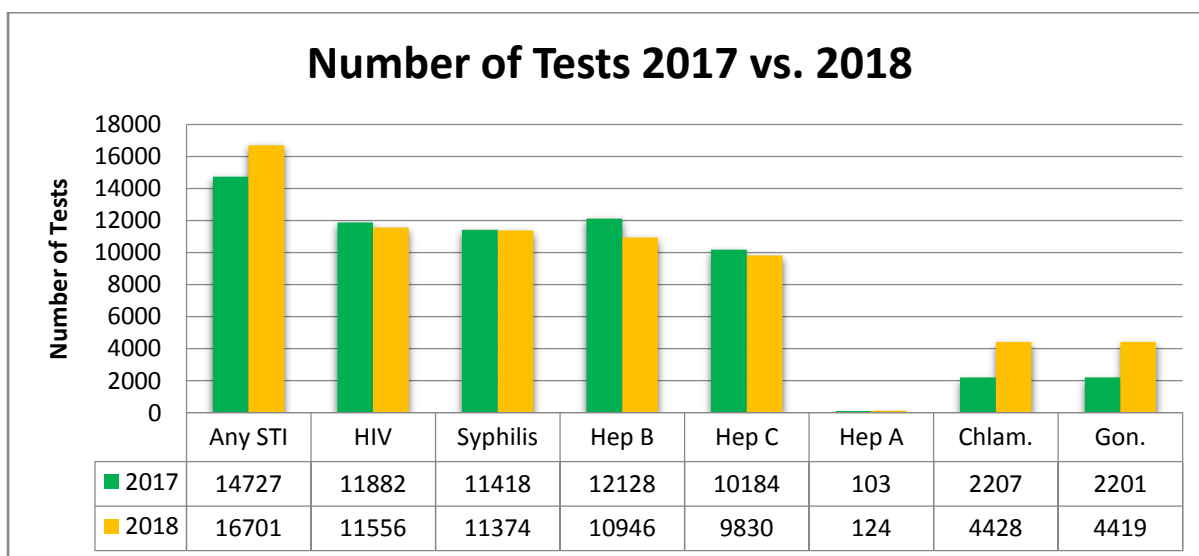


**Data reported by Communicable Disease Clinic NHS, represents all patients tested/treated nationally, some cases pending*

The large increase in detected cases in 2017 led to an increase in successful treatments in 2018, as patients take 6-10 months to finish treatment. The Communicable Disease Clinic has been very diligent in ensuring case management and follow-up, but more support is needed for outreach and testing coverage for up-scaling Tuberculosis prevention.

HIV AND STI TESTING

Testing continues to increase for HIV and STI's. People tested for at least 1 STI increased from **14,727 in 2017 to 16,701 in 2018** (13.4% increase). This increase was mainly in Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea testing. This indicates great progress, as increasing voluntary testing is the best way to control STI rates. Testing links people to care and treatment. Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea testing has greatly increased compared to previous years. However, many more people still do not know their HIV or STI status. While this is good progress, the need for improving public awareness and access for testing services is on-going.





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WHY WAS THERE AN INCREASE IN TESTING?

- The placement of diagnostic technologies in MT2 Hospital in Savaii during 2017 and additional equipment for TTM Hospital Apia (supported by Ministry of Health and UNDP/Global Fund) increased the access of testing services.
- In 2016-2018, the Ministry of Health HIV, STI and TB programme up-scaled public awareness efforts via the T3 campaign in order to increase voluntary testing, promote dialogue on sexual health to reduce stigma, and encourage people to access treatment services.
- Partners such as **Samoa Fa'afafine Association, Samoa Family Health Association, Samoa Red Cross Society, the THRIVE Initiative, Samoa AIDS Foundation, and UNDP Global Fund** have all launched their own campaigns advocating for voluntary testing, knowing your status, and conducting community screenings. This has contributed greatly to testing referrals and overall awareness.

For inquiries, please contact the HIV, STI, and TB Programme at the Ministry of Health via phone 68100 ext. 195 or go to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HIVSTITBMoH/>

**TALK IT
TEST IT
TREAT IT**

Don't just make choices
Make the Right choice!

for any Sexually Transmitted Infections

Ministry of Health 68100 ext 195/66700

Samoa Family Health Association 26929