

# STD RATES HIT RECORD HIGH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest data on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared April to be STD Awareness Month. The latest data show that “STDs are at a record high.”

Chlamydia is the most common STD; there was a 5 percent increase between 2015 and 2016. Gonorrhea is the second most common STD; its numbers shot up by 19 percent. Syphilis is third; it spiked by 18 percent. Who is most likely to suffer from these STDs? Young people aged 15-24, gay and bisexual men, and pregnant women.

According to the CDC, “sexually active young people are at a higher risk of getting chlamydia,” and this is true of gonorrhea and syphilis as well. “This is due to behaviors and biological factors common among young people. Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men are also at risk since chlamydia can spread through oral and anal sex.”

What does the CDC suggest we do about this crisis? “Talk, Test, and Treat.” Talk openly about STDs, get tested, and get treated.

When the CDC says that “sexually active young people are at a higher risk” of getting an STD, what it really means is that promiscuity can be dangerous, even lethal. It should say so.

When it says that there are “behaviors and biological factors common among young people,” that contribute to STDs, what it means is that such things as binge drinking and risky behaviors can be dangerous, even lethal. It should say so.

When it says that men having sex with men are at greater risk of getting an STD, it means that sodomy can be dangerous, even

lethal. It should say so.

Instead, the CDC says we need to “talk, test, and treat.” But that strategy, which has been tried for decades, has obviously failed.

So why do we have record rates of STDs? Recklessness for one. And to some degree the problem is iatrogenic, that is, it is doctor induced. To be specific, lame advice by the CDC (and others in the medical field) is at least partially responsible for this epidemic.

Instead of challenging young people, heterosexual or homosexual, to practice restraint, we ask them to have a conversation about their behavior. Unfortunately, the conversation never centers on why they are abusing their body, or why they are infecting unsuspecting partners. And it surely never touches on guilt.

The current situation is so perverse that we now have a toy company, GIANTmicrobes, based in Stamford, Connecticut, “rebranding STDs as ‘charming’ and ‘cuddly’ with a line of stuffed animals based on venereal diseases in honor of STD Awareness Month.”

The company has released a statement saying, “Love might be in the air this spring, but just remember to stay safe and keep clean this 2018, and know GIANTmicrobes STDs are on the prowl and just can’t wait to jump in your pants!”

According to the owner of this company, Andrew Klein, the reason for this campaign is to “break the stigma surrounding STDs.”

The man is positively clueless. Never before has there been less stigma attached to reckless sex than there is today, and never before have the STD rates been higher. When stigma was severe—in the 1950s—the rates were incredibly low.

We have no problem stigmatizing smokers, but we have a real problem stigmatizing those who engage in reckless sex. So stigmatization is not a taboo among the cultural elite—it just depends on whether the subject is smoking or sodomy.