

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April is National Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Awareness Month

Did you know that April is National STI Awareness Month? Polk-Norman-Mahnomen Community Health Services is taking this opportunity to highlight the importance of STI prevention, testing, and education as part of your overall health.

We offer comprehensive STI testing at all locations in Polk, Norman, and Mahnomen counties.

Anyone who is sexually active can get an STI. Learning more about STIs, and how to prevent them, is an important step toward protecting your health and your partner's health.

STIs (sexually transmitted infections) are passed from one person to another through vaginal, oral, or anal sex. They are very common, and many people who have an STI don't experience any symptoms. Without treatment, STIs can lead to serious health complications—but the good news is that most are easy to test for and treat.

There are more than 30 types of bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can be transmitted through sexual contact. Some STIs can also be passed from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

Eight pathogens account for the majority of STIs. Four of them are currently curable—syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis—and can be treated with antibiotics. The other four are viral infections—hepatitis B, herpes simplex virus (HSV), HIV, and human papillomavirus (HPV)—which can be managed with treatment, though not cured.

Prevention is key. When used correctly and consistently, condoms are one of the most effective methods to protect against STIs, including HIV. We recommend using dual protection: a barrier method like condoms, along with another effective contraceptive method (such as the pill, Depo shot, patch, ring, IUD, or Nexplanon) to help prevent both unintended pregnancy and STIs.

Getting tested is simple, fast, and confidential. Some STI tests require just a urine sample or a quick finger poke. Cost should never be a barrier—our services are low-cost or no-cost, and no one is turned away for inability to pay.

Take charge of your sexual health. Get tested. Stay informed. Stay safe.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Polk County Public Health at 218-281-3385 or text 218-280-1117 to make an appointment.

XXX

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