

# Provider News

A Newsletter for Shasta County Clinicians

Fall 2016

Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency - Public Health

## Gun violence called a ‘public health crisis’ by American Medical Association

The American Medical Association has called gun violence in America “a public health crisis.” Firearm-related injuries and deaths are decreasing in the state, but are still high in Shasta County as compared to national and state levels. Between 1968 and 2011, more people in the US died from gun violence than died in all the wars the United States has ever fought (starting with the American War for Independence).

Keeping firearms in or around the house increases the risk of death by homicide or suicide. The percentage of gun ownership in Shasta County is relatively high, and this increases the risks of homicide and suicide.

More than 30,000 firearm deaths occur each year in the United States. More than twice this number go to hospitals because of nonfatal firearm injuries. The average firearm death rate during the period of 1999-2012 in Shasta

County was 14.6 per 100,000 population, compared with 8.6 per 100,000 in California and 10.1 per 100,000 in the United States.

Firearm-related injury deaths include unintentional firearm injury (accidental shooting), self-inflicted injury by firearms (suicide), assault by firearms (homicide), legal intervention by firearms (police shooting), and injury of undetermined intent by firearms (ICD-10 codes U01.4, W32-W34, X72-X74, X93-X95, Y22-Y24, and Y35.0).

You can help ensure that your patients are safe by asking them:

- Do you have guns in your home?
- Do you keep your guns in secure places with trigger locks and remove them from places where children or vulnerable people might

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## Marijuana exposure in children

Marijuana exposure among children is increasing, and it can cause significant health problems. A new study presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies 2016 Meeting found that one in six infants and toddlers admitted to a Colorado hospital with coughing, wheezing and other symptoms of bronchiolitis tested positive for marijuana exposure. The rate of marijuana exposure among children ages 5 and younger in the United States increased by more than 147 percent between 2006 and 2013, according to a study published in Clinical Pediatrics.

In states where marijuana has been legalized, exposure in children increased by more than 600 percent.

The study used data from the National Poison Data System, and it concluded that most children were exposed to marijuana after swallowing it in items like brownies, cookies and other foods. While most exposures had minor clinical effects, some children experienced decreased breathing,

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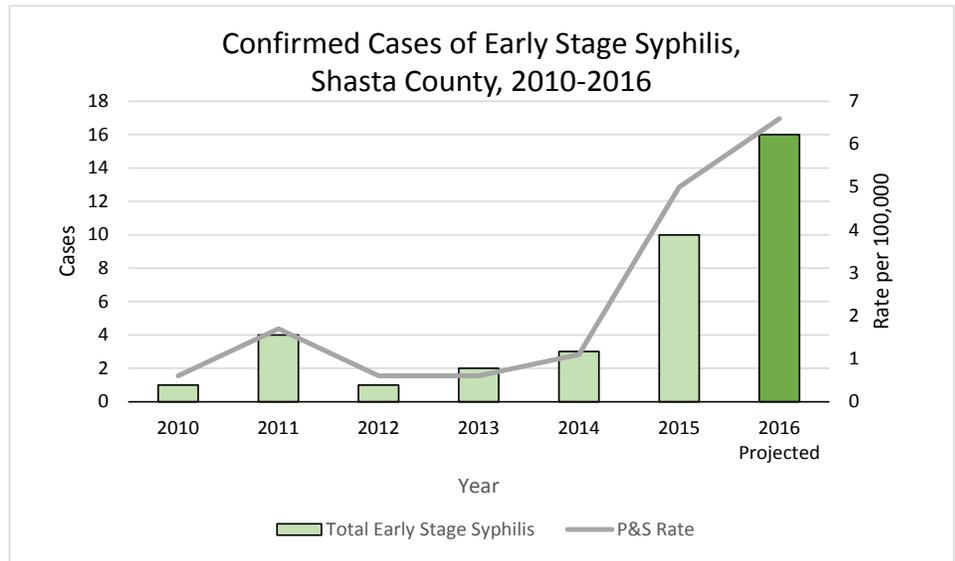
# Screen your patients: Syphilis outbreak continues in Shasta County

Shasta County is experiencing a syphilis outbreak. This disease often goes undiagnosed because it's largely asymptomatic. However, it can result in damage to the brain, nerves, eyes and heart.

Please screen sexually active patients for syphilis, especially pregnant women; Shasta County has already had two cases of syphilis in pregnant women this year.

Congenital syphilis is preventable. If the pregnant woman and her sexual partner are treated promptly and appropriately and don't get infected again, the newborn likely will not be infected. Syphilis is usually treated with benzathine penicillin G IM and sexual partners should also be treated.

Shasta County Public Health does not screen for sexually transmitted infections, but some of the facilities that do are listed here.



## These places screen for sexually transmitted infections:

Shasta Community Health Center:  
246-5710

Women's Health Specialists:  
221-0193

Planned Parenthood:  
351-7100

## Marijuana

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seizures and even coma.

Marijuana remains popular among teenagers. Some believe it is not harmful because it is natural, but it contains more than 400 chemicals. It can be addictive, and it is linked with fatal and non-fatal car crashes, difficulty in school, multiple mental health issues including psychosis and panic, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

In your practice, talk to parents about the dangers of marijuana exposure in their children. If they use marijuana, remind them of the importance of keeping it secure, especially from young children.

## Gun violence...

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get access to them?

- Do you store your ammunition separately from your guns?
- Do you or anyone in your family suffer from depression, and if so, are you being treated for it?
- Has anyone in your home had suicidal thoughts?

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-TALK, or text LISTEN to 741741.

## Flu shots - get yours now

By Health Officer order starting in 2013, healthcare providers are required to have flu shots. This includes people who work in licensed health care facilities and ambulance services in Shasta County, and it requires employees, licensed independent practitioners (physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners with hospital privileges), volunteers,

and contractors to receive an annual influenza vaccination or, if they decline, to wear a mask during each influenza season, November 1- March 30, while working in patient care areas. Learn more at [www.shastahhsa.net](http://www.shastahhsa.net) – click on “Professionals,” then “Medical Professionals,” then “Flu Vaccine for Medical Professionals.”

## End of Life Option Act now in effect

California’s End of Life Option Act, effective June 9, 2016, allows an adult in sound mental capacity diagnosed with a terminal disease who meets certain qualifications, including visits to two doctors, to request aid-in-dying drug from

their attending physician. The Act requires participating physicians to submit specified forms to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). This information is available at [www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/EndofLifeOptionAct.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/EndofLifeOptionAct.aspx).

## Help available for problem gamblers

A simple screening tool can help you assess whether a patient has a gambling addiction. Ask these three questions:

- Have you ever tried to cut down or control your gambling?
- Have you ever lied to family members, friends or others about how much you gamble or how much money you lost gambling?
- Have there ever been periods lasting two weeks or longer

when you spent a lot of time thinking about your gambling experiences or planning out future gambling ventures or bets?

If your patient answers “yes” to any of these three questions, a more complete self-assessment tool is available at [www.problemgambling.ca.gov/ccpgwebsite/for-gamblers/gambler-self-assessment.aspx](http://www.problemgambling.ca.gov/ccpgwebsite/for-gamblers/gambler-self-assessment.aspx). You can also direct them to 1-800-GAMBLER for no-cost help.

## Electronic smoking devices now prohibited for people under 21

Beginning June 9, 2016, a new law raised the minimum age of sale for tobacco products in California from 18 to 21, except for active duty military personnel in the

U.S. Armed Forces. Electronic smoking devices are included in the definition of tobacco products. This includes e-cigarettes, e-hookah, vape pens, vaping devices, mods,



### Introducing:

Dierdre Amaro, MD  
Shasta County Forensic  
Pathologist

Hello, Shasta County! As the new Forensic Pathologist for Shasta County, I look forward to collaborating with my fellow physicians and health care professionals to improve the overall health of our community.

I come to Shasta County having previously completed general pathology residency training and a neuropathology fellowship at the University of California, San Diego, as well as a forensic pathology fellowship in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

For death certification questions, follow-up on a shared patient, or other forensic pathology-related queries, please contact me at the Shasta County coroner’s office at 225-5551 or via email: [damaro@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:damaro@co.shasta.ca.us).

e-liquids, hookah, cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos/little cigars, chewing tobacco, snus and pipe tobacco. You can learn more about this law [here](#).

**Shasta County Public Health**  
2650 Breslauer Way  
Redding, CA 96001

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## In brief

### Secure and dispose of unused medication

Only one-third of parents said their child's doctor had discussed what to do with leftover medicine, according to the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health – but this percentage can be strongly influenced by a forward-thinking medical professional.

When providers talked to parents about how to dispose of any excess drugs, only a quarter of those parents still had leftover pills in the home. Conversely, in homes where doctors didn't give guidance on what to do with the excess pills, more than half of parents kept the extra pills at

home, the survey found.

NoRxAbuse is a local coalition of medical professionals and others whose mission is to improve patient safety and prevent prescription drug abuse by providing tools to healthcare professionals, increase public awareness and develop viable solutions for local communities. Learn more at [www.norxabuse.org](http://www.norxabuse.org).

If your patients need to dispose of unused medication, direct them to [www.rxsafeshasta.com](http://www.rxsafeshasta.com), which includes a list of local 24/7 medication disposal kiosks.

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