



Man assaulted in Starbuck; suspect flees in long chase. **A3.**

WNBA All-Stars put on a show. B1.

WILLMAR, MINN.

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Photos by Macy Moore / West Central Tribune

William Heine, 2, checks out the vintage tractors on display while cruising around during Bonanza Valley Days on Saturday in downtown Brooten.

Minn. syphilis cases up last year

By David Olson
The Forum

ST. PAUL — Cases of syphilis rose sharply in Minnesota in 2021, mirroring a disturbing national trend of quickly rising case numbers, according to an annual report issued by the Minnesota Department of Health.

The situation is prompting a renewed call by health officials for regular testing and prompt treatment to blunt the rise in case numbers, particularly in outbreak areas such as Duluth and counties including Cass and Beltrami, which have seen sustained increases in syphilis cases.

Statewide 2020 data showed a decline in some sexually transmitted disease rates in 2020, but 2021 numbers reveal an overall uptick in STD cases year over year.

“It may take time to assess and understand how COVID-19-related disruptions to health care access or health care seeking behaviors may have impacted and changed the screening rates of STDs and HIV, compared to the pre-COVID-19 era,” said Christine Jones, STD, HIV and TB section manager for the Minnesota Department of Health.

“What we do know is that the rates of syphilis are troubling, especially the rise in congenital syphilis, or when a pregnant person passes syphilis to an infant,” Jones said.

In 2021, cases of congenital syphilis in Minnesota increased by 115% to 15 cases.

“CS can cause low birth weight, harm or death to an infant if not treated. It is preventable when it’s caught early,” Jones said, adding that health professionals are encouraging people to get tested regularly for STDs, especially if they are pregnant.

Overall STD numbers remained at near historic high levels in 2021, with 33,706 STD cases reported in Minnesota. That compares to 33,245 cases in 2020 — a 1% increase.

Chlamydia remained the No. 1 reported STD in the state, with 22,578 cases reported, a 3% increase over 2020.

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SUMMERTIME FUN

City festivals celebrated in Brooten, Clara City, Litchfield

By Macy Moore
West Central Tribune

The summer festival schedule continued over the weekend

with Bonanza Valley Days in Brooten, Prairie Fest in Clara City and Watercade Celebration in Litchfield.

Those in attendance

saw marching bands, kiddie parades, a Grande Day parade, a classic car show, a tractor show, candy everywhere and, of course, new royalty

for the coming year. See more at Wctrib.com’s Photo Gallery page: <https://www.wctrib.com/topics/photo-galleries>.



Left: Members of the Litchfield Marching Dragons march down North Armstrong Avenue while participating in the Watercade parade Saturday in downtown Litchfield. Right: Ryan Speiser, 10, at left, shows little brother Zachary Speiser, 3, his Iron Man face paint created by Wendy Parrilli, of Las Vegas, during Prairie Fest on Friday in Clara City.



Minnesota considered a ‘safe haven’ state

But some abortion restrictions, such as waiting period, written in law

Subd. 2. Abortion. "Abortion" means the use or procedure or device to intentionally terminate the pregnancy to increase the probability of a live birth, to preserve the life of the mother, or to prevent serious physical or mental damage to the mother.

Penalty. A person who performs an abortion in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Notification concerning abortion. A person who performs an abortion shall be performed upon an individual who is at least 16 years of age and is not a minor, and the physician shall notify the individual of the following, by telephone or in person, by the physician who is to perform the abortion, at least 24 hours before the abortion:

(i) the particular procedure to be performed, including the risks of infection, pain, and other complications; and

(ii) that the father is liable to assist in the support of her child, even if the father is not the biological father of the child.

2021 Minnesota Statutes

Subd. 3. Regulation of disposal. Remains of a human fetus resulting from an abortion or miscarriage, induced or occurring accidentally at a hospital, clinic, or medical facility must be deposited or disposed of in this section or in the manner provided by this section or, if not possible, as directed by the commissioner of health at the place and in the manner provided by this section or, if not possible, as directed by the commissioner of health.

Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

A collage of Minnesota Statutes regarding abortions.

By Molly Castle Work
Post Bulletin

ROCHESTER — The June 24 Supreme Court ruling, which overturned Roe v. Wade and ended 50 years of federal abortion rights, has many people looking to their state laws to see what protections are in place.

Although Minnesota has been categorized as a “safe haven” state, one of two Midwestern states where abortion is expected to stay legal, many Minnesotans aren’t aware that there are abortion restrictions written into the law.

The restrictions, such as a 24-hour waiting period and mandating that doctors share information on medical risks authored by the government,

have the effect of spreading misinformation about abortions, restricting trained health providers from performing abortions and delaying patients receiving care.

Megan Peterson, executive director of Gender Justice, said she is frustrated that Minnesota is seen as a safe state, when anti-abortion candidates are running for office at every level of state government, only eight clinics provide abortion care — most in major cities — and more than 400 bills seeking to restrict or ban abortion access have been introduced since 1995.

“Minnesotans are like, ‘We’re a cool state, we’re a health care state, the Mayo Clinic is here,’” Peterson said.

“Everyone assumes things are good, but it’s been not good for a long time.”

Gender Justice, a policy advocacy organization headquartered in St. Paul, started the Unrestrict Minnesota campaign in 2019 to educate Minnesotans about these restrictions. Unrestrict Minnesota also filed a lawsuit to challenge them, and Peterson said she hopes for a decision by the end of August.

What are these abortion restrictions? How will they affect Minnesotans?

1. Doctors are required to provide patients with government information on medical risks even if the risks are inaccurate or lack evidence.

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