

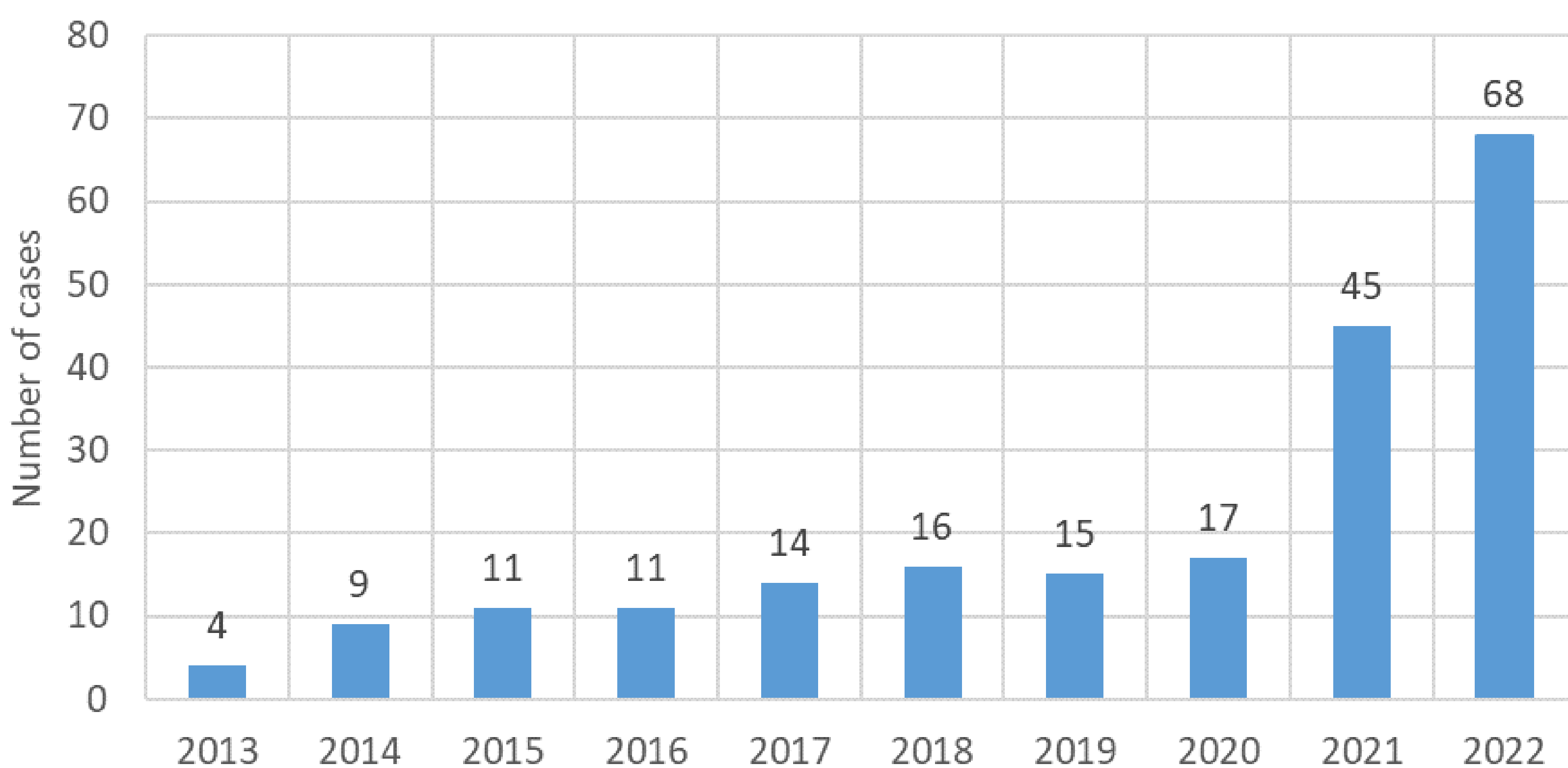
Central Oregon Syphilis Update

Report Years 2013-2022

Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties

Syphilis in Central Oregon

Annual number of syphilis cases, Central Oregon, 2013-2022



Syphilis cases in Central Oregon have been trending upward in recent years.

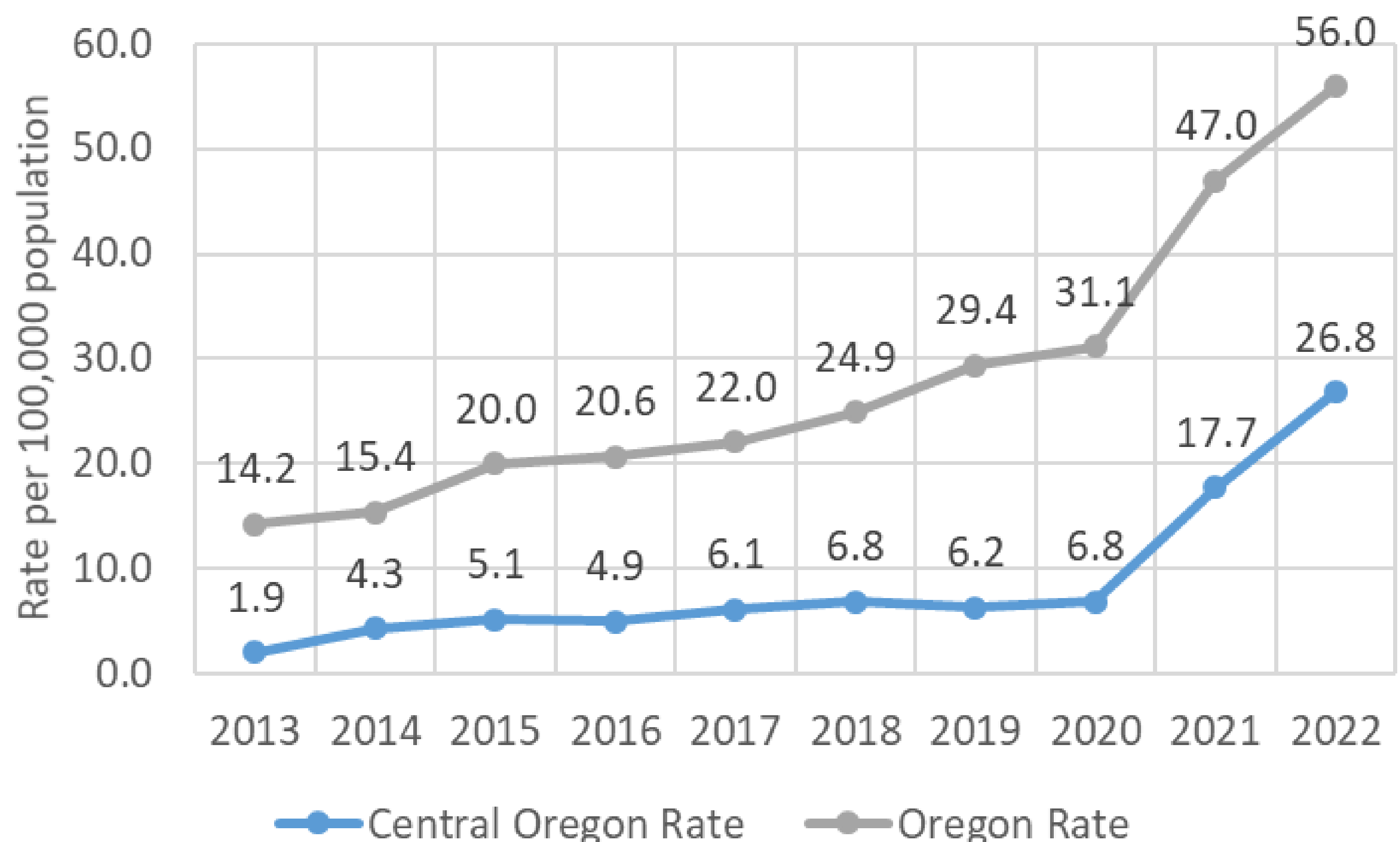
- There were 210 cases of syphilis reported in Central Oregon between 2013 and 2022, with nearly 54% diagnosed in 2021-2022
- In 2022, 68 syphilis cases of all stages were reported in Central Oregon, including 56 cases of early syphilis, which is when sexual transmission of syphilis occurs
- There were **33 cases** of syphilis reported in Central Oregon during the first quarter of 2023

Note. Data include syphilis cases of all stages with report date in calendar years 2013-2022.

Annual syphilis rates, Central Oregon and Oregon, 2013-2022

The syphilis rate in Central Oregon is growing faster than the statewide rate.

- This difference in rate growth means the gap between the Central Oregon and Oregon rates has been decreasing over the past ten years
- In 2013, the Oregon rate was around 7.5 times the Central Oregon rate
- In 2022, the Oregon rate was 2.1 times the Central Oregon rate

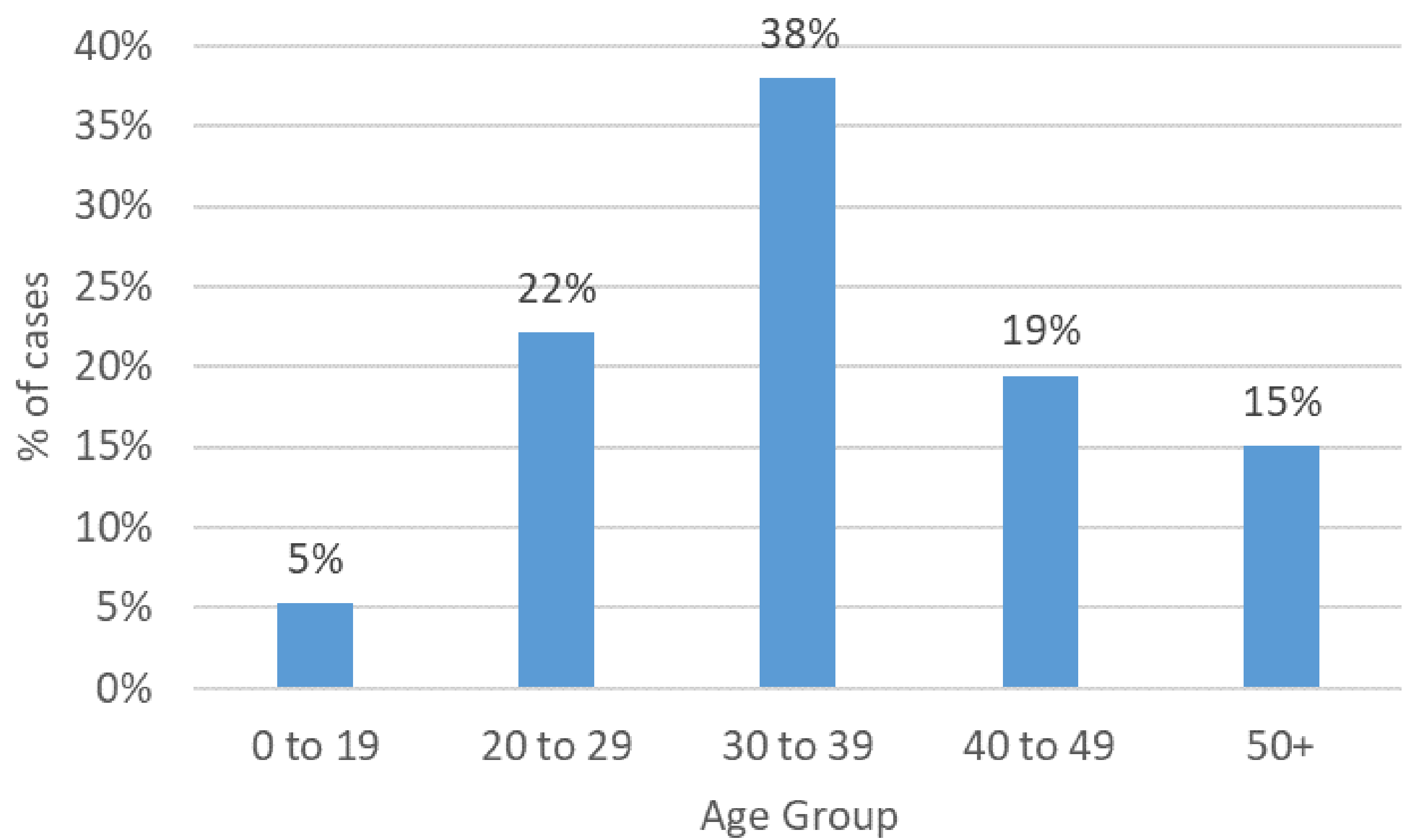


Note. 2018-2022 rates calculated using population estimates from the Population Research Center at Portland State University. 2013-2017 rates calculated using American Community Survey 5-year population estimates. Rates based on case counts of less than 6 should be interpreted with caution.

Spotlight on Syphilis Cases in 2021-2022

Syphilis Cases by Age Group

Syphilis cases by age group, Central Oregon, 2021-2022



The 30-39 years old age group had the highest percentage of syphilis cases between 2021-2022, but cases were seen across all age groups.

- Statewide, most syphilis cases are seen in people in their 20s and 30s

Syphilis Case Risk Factors

Many factors are contributing to the rise in syphilis cases:

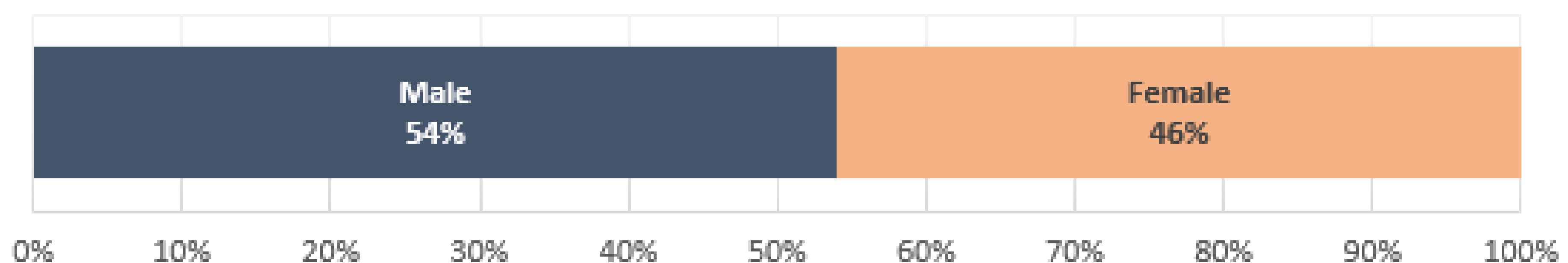
- High rates of STIs among people who use drugs are reported in Central Oregon and across the nation. Over half of all Central Oregon syphilis cases reported in 2021-2022 reported methamphetamine use and/or intravenous drug use.
- Around a quarter of all male syphilis cases in 2021-2022 reported having male sexual partners.
- People with a history of chlamydia or gonorrhea may be more likely to be diagnosed with syphilis in the future. In 2022, about 30% of Central Oregon syphilis cases had been diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea in the two years prior to syphilis diagnosis or at the time of syphilis diagnosis. A diagnosis of chlamydia or gonorrhea is an opportunity to provide HIV/STI prevention counseling.
- Oregon Health Authority reports that about 40% of Oregon syphilis cases reported between 2013-2017 were coinfecting with HIV, making HIV testing of the utmost importance for all syphilis cases and people at risk for acquiring syphilis.

Syphilis Cases by Sex

Syphilis case rates are increasing among heterosexual men and women in recent years.

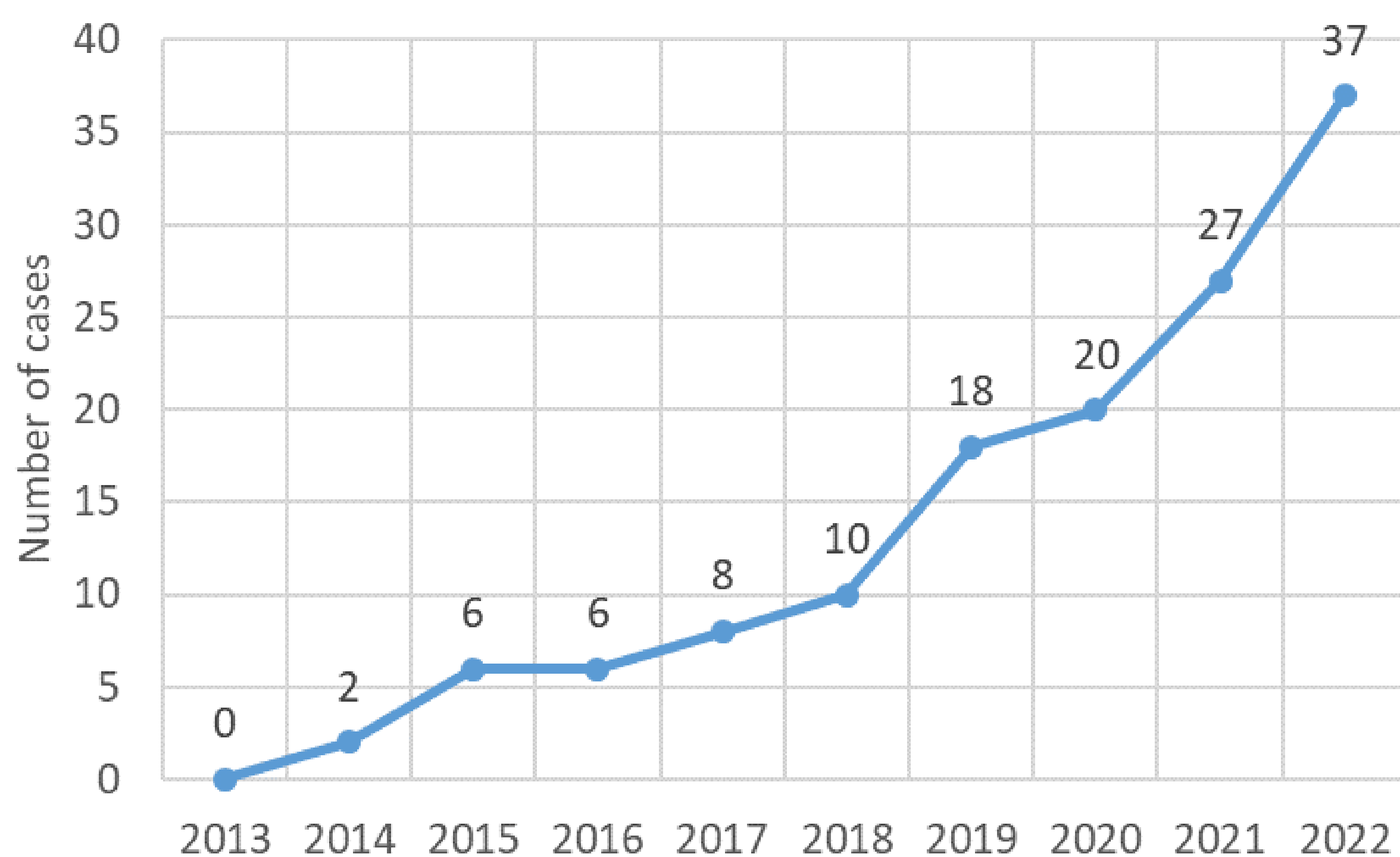
- From 2013-2020, only around 29% of cumulative Central Oregon syphilis cases were female
- In 2021 and 2022, males made up 54% of cases and females made up 46% of cases in Central Oregon. This trend of cases being more evenly distributed between sexes is being seen across Oregon.
- The increase in cases among females of reproductive age (15-44 years) is contributing to the statewide increase in congenital syphilis cases

Syphilis cases by sex assigned at birth, Central Oregon, 2021-2022



Congenital Syphilis

Annual number of congenital (age <1) syphilis cases, Oregon, 2013-2022



In parallel with the statewide increase in syphilis rates, there has been a recent increase in case counts for congenital syphilis (CS) in Oregon.

- CS is an infection in a fetus or infant that results from untreated syphilis during pregnancy. CS can lead to stillbirth, infant death, and serious birth defects including brain and nerve problems. Pregnant people should be tested for syphilis at the first prenatal visit and again during the third trimester.
- The number of annual CS cases has been increasing over the past ten years. The highest number of cases was seen in 2022, with a total of 37 CS cases in Oregon. This increasing trend further highlights the importance of testing people of childbearing age who may be at risk.

Public Health Response

Local Public Health Departments (LHDs) work closely with the healthcare community to prevent the spread of STIs in Central Oregon.

- Of the 113 syphilis cases that were reported in Central Oregon between 2021-2022, 96% were interviewed by regional LHD staff, with at least one sexual contact elicited from 89% of cases
- In partnership with public health, please contact your local health department to expedite follow up for all suspect and positive syphilis cases

24/7 Communicable Disease reporting lines:

Crook County: (541) 447-5165 Deschutes County: (541) 322-7418 Jefferson County: (541) 475-4456

What Providers Need to Know About Syphilis Testing

Oregon is a state with a high prevalence of syphilis and high rate of congenital syphilis, therefore, the recommendations for syphilis testing have been updated.

Who should be tested:

Non-pregnant people with a cervix and/or vagina

- At least once for sexually active individuals under 45 if not tested since January 2021 and at least every 12 months if indications for more intensive screening
- Any person who presents for HIV/STI testing

Pregnant people

- Three screenings recommended:
 1. At confirmation of pregnancy or the first prenatal encounter (ideally during the first trimester)
 2. In the early third trimester, ideally between 24-28 weeks gestation
 3. At delivery with results documented prior to hospital discharge
- At **ER or Urgent Care** encounters if no prior testing documentation

Men who have sex with men and transgender and/or gender expansive people

- At least annually for sexually active individuals
- Every 3-6 months if indications for more intensive screening

Others

- At least once for sexually active individuals under 45 if not tested since January 2021 and at least annually if indications for more intensive screening
- Any person who presents for HIV/STI testing

When testing for syphilis, also test for HIV and CT/GC, including extragenital (rectal, pharyngeal) testing.

Syphilis is a reportable condition, and all Oregon health care providers and clinical laboratories are required by law to report to the local health authority under OAR-333-018-0015.

Data from Oregon Public Health Epidemiologists' User System (ORPHEUS). Data are preliminary as of March 31, 2023.