



Trending Diseases of Quarter Past & Present: iGAS & STIs

Recap of Previous Quarter: iGAS

Earlier this year, cases of invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS) continued trending upwards across District 2, with a peak of 11 confirmed cases in February and 17 reported cases in March. This disease occurs when Group A Streptococcus (GAS) invades portions of the body that do not normally have bacteria in them, causing severe forms of infection that require hospitalization. View more information on symptoms, risk factors, and protection against GAS from the Georgia Department of Public Health [here](#).

Cases of iGAS from January to March in 2023

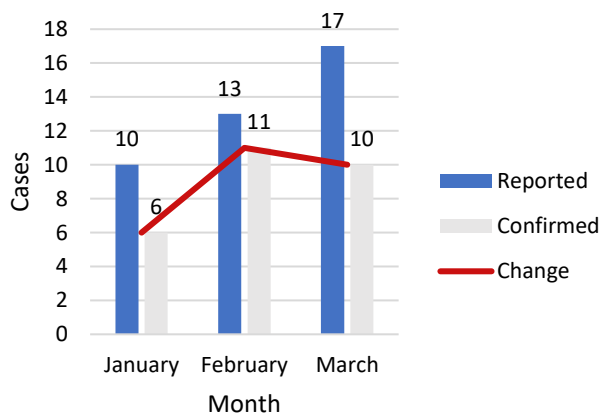


Figure 1. Bar graph of reported and confirmed cases of iGAS between January and March of 2023.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

From April to June, there were 217 new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) across District 2: 134 cases of chlamydia, 28 cases of gonorrhea, and 55 cases of syphilis. The number of new STI cases has increased overall from 59 in April to 85 in June—a 44.1% increase. June had also seen a dramatic increase (42.1%) in the number of chlamydia cases as well.

New STI Cases in District 2

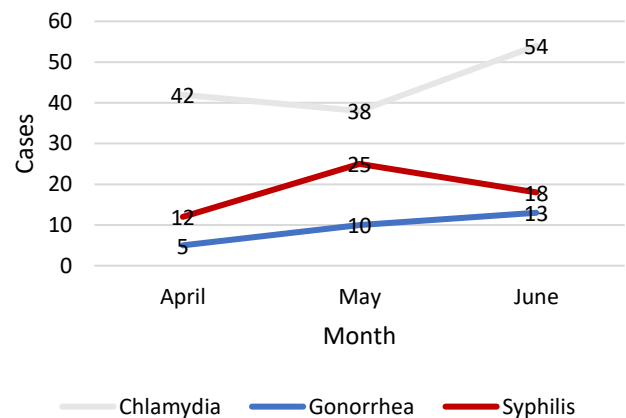


Figure 2. Line graph of reported and confirmed STI cases over time in District 2 from April to June (2023).

To address rising STI cases, District 2 held testing events at several county health departments, as well as at Hartwell Pride and Brenau University, between April 11th and April 19th. According to data collected in 2022, around 60% of new chlamydia and gonorrhea cases occurred in the younger population, especially the 20-24 age group that contributed 36.6% to the total number of cases. Confidential testing and treatment services are available at all county health departments within District 2. More information on STIs and their prevention can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [here](#).



Notifiable Diseases

Distribution of Outbreak Cases in District 2

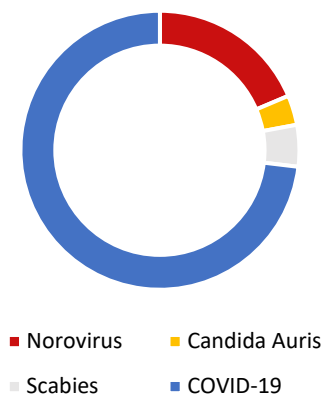


Figure 3. Donut chart of outbreak cases by disease in District 2 from April to June for 2023.

Other Notifiable Diseases and Outbreaks

For other notifiable diseases, there were 26 COVID-19 outbreaks, half of which occurred in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) across 6 counties (Banks, Forsyth, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin, and Towns) that affected 79 patients. 1,223 probable and confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported for District 2 in those three months.

During the same time period, 27 persons fell ill to a norovirus outbreak in Dawson County. In Hall County, a scabies outbreak infected 7 patients at a LTCF, and 5 hospital-acquired infections were linked to *Candida auris*. Recommended prevention measures include proper handwashing and avoiding contact with suspected or confirmed sources of the disease. For more information, please visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

Viral Hepatitis

Of 261 reported hepatitis cases, 38 (14.6%) were attributed to hepatitis B (HBV) and 219 (83.9%) to hepatitis C. Hepatitis C (HCV) cases decreased by 23.4% from May (N = 94) to June (N = 72) and overall by 25.0% between April and June.

In late 2021, a workgroup was formed to develop a collaborative approach to eliminate viral hepatitis in Georgia by improving affordable and equitable access to prevention services, testing, supportive care, and treatment. Goals include improving surveillance and research, reducing barriers in accessing hepatitis-related services, and increasing the number of providers offering such services. For more information on symptoms and reducing the spread of hepatitis, please visit the Georgia Department of Public Health website [here](#). For more information on screening and testing for HBV and HCV, please scan the QR codes below.



Recommendations for HBV
Screening and Testing



Recommendations for HCV
Screening and Testing

Seasonal Watch

Guidance for Summer

Summertime generally sees increases in cases for foodborne illnesses (also called enteric diseases), which are caused by consuming contaminated food or drinks. Exposure to contaminated bodies of water, be it a lake or a pool, can also make you ill. Typical symptoms include nausea, stomach pain, fever, vomiting, and diarrhea. Between April and June, there were 79 non-outbreak-related cases of gastrointestinal illness caused by Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), *Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Salmonella*, and *Yersinia*. In particular, *Campylobacter* contributed to 46.8% (N = 37) of recorded foodborne illness cases during this time period.

To avoid contracting and spreading foodborne illness, be sure to practice proper handwashing and safe handling/preparation of food--especially cooking meat and eggs to safe internal temperatures. Clean and disinfect surfaces often, and wash laundry well. Ensure that food is thawed safely, and place items in the refrigerator within 2 hours. To avoid waterborne disease, do not ingest from any body of water, especially if it has not been treated properly.

Back to School

District 2 Public Health strongly encourages parents, guardians, and students to prioritize immunizations to prepare for the upcoming academic year. Please review the Georgia Back to School requirements. For more information, please contact your local health department or visit the Georgia Department of Public Health [website](#).



Epidemiologist Department's Food for Thought

We are proud to serve the 13 counties of District 2 and their communities. Many times, the cases that we see can be prevented—be it through vaccines or simple precautions such as proper handwashing and cleaning practices. One of the best ways to support your community is by protecting your health, and in doing so, protecting others. Understanding, patience, and kindness for yourself and your neighbors is key to a healthier future for all.

How to Report Diseases

Information about disease reporting can be found on the DPH website under Notifiable Disease Reporting Requirements .	
<i>To Report Immediately</i>	<i>To Report Within 7 Days</i>
Phone: (770) 519-7661 OR Public Health Line: 1-866-782-4584	Email: DPHDistrict2epi@gets.onmicrosoft.com
Fax: 770-535-5848	Online: State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SENDSS)