

Letters to the editor for Tuesday, April 1, Minneapolis-St. Paul StarTribune

RISE IN STD RATES

First step: talk

I would like to thank the Star Tribune and reporter Josephine Marcotty for the March 31 article on rising STD rates in Minnesota.

I was surprised and encouraged to read such a thorough and accurate article on an issue that is often clouded by stigmas and moral arguments. Additionally, the article avoided the shaming and blaming of sexually active teen girls that many recent discussions of this issue have included.

Most important was a strong emphasis on the need for education. The first step in lowering our shockingly high infection rates is educating our young people about them. For two years I have been a peer educator on sexual health issues. I can say from experience that it is not that hard to start the conversation about STDs, and it is vital to the health of young people and everyone in Minnesota.

The article also mentioned the bill that would mandate sex education in Minnesota. On April 8, a group of youth from high schools and peer education groups will be at the Capitol lobbying for that very bill. We hope that this year the bill will pass, and we will soon have comprehensive and accurate sex education in every classroom in Minnesota.

Right now, the first and most important thing we can do is talk. The article and the recent information from the CDC's STD study should serve as a wake-up call to parents, educators, lawmakers and young people. Let's talk about sex.

MIRIAM AMELANG, MINNEAPOLIS