

Russian Lawmaker Demands to Know Who's Responsible for Syphilis Outbreak

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A United Russia lawmaker in Saratov has sounded the alarm over "people rotting" from a syphilis epidemic in the city center, a media report said Wednesday.

At a session of the Saratov City Duma on Tuesday, of the eight items listed on the agenda for discussion, United Russia deputy Alexander Vantsov skipped right to the last one — syphilis — and demanded answers, local news website Versiya-Saratov reported.

"We have a 36 percent increase in syphilis here. What does that mean? What is the cause? We need to be critical of this," Vantsov was cited as saying. "Name whoever is responsible. And laugh all you want, but people are rotting."

In mid-September, Yelena Volkova, acting chairwoman of the Saratov city administration's health department, was cited by Sarnovosti.ru as saying a 33 percent increase in uncovered cases of the illness had been recorded in the first eight months of this year.

Medical workers have attributed the increase to better health care, saying the number

of infections has not actually risen but the number of uncovered infections has, Sarnovosti.ru reported.

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