

TEEN PREGNANCY UPDATE: JANUARY 2007

1. New Mexico has the 3rd highest teen birth rate in the nation. Although our rates are declining, the reduction is slower and less significant than other states and the nation.¹
2. Declines have been recorded for teen pregnancy, teen births and teen abortions.
3. In 2004 there were approximately 4,399 births to New Mexico teens.
4. Hispanic teen girls make up about 50% of the female teen population in New Mexico. However, they represent approximately 67% of our births to teens.
5. The primary risk factors for teen pregnancy are:
 - early school failure
 - early behavioral problems
 - distressed/dysfunctional families
 - poverty
6. The primary protective factors for teen pregnancy are:
 - a strong connection to family
 - a strong connection to school
7. National research indicates there are several programs that have demonstrated success in reducing teen pregnancy and/or risky sexual behavior.²
 - Sex and HIV Education Programs that stress *both* abstinence and contraception
 - Clinic Services that provide education, counseling, support and education
 - Service Learning Programs that involve youth in community service with structured time for preparation and reflection
 - Comprehensive Programs that address a multitude of health, education, employment, and family issues
 - High Quality Early Childhood Programs that build social skills and a foundation for academic success can reduce pregnancy when those children become teens.
8. New Mexico would benefit greatly from reduced teen pregnancy. We would have less child abuse, fewer low birth-weight babies and welfare dependent families. There would be more high school graduates, taxpayers, and fathers in the home.

(continued)

9. Total impact on taxpayers nationally is \$320 million for the new teen mothers each year in New Mexico. Delaying all teen births in New Mexico each year could save New Mexican taxpayers nearly \$75 million annually.³
10. Between 1991 and 2004 there have been more than 66,700 teen births in New Mexico, costing taxpayers a total of \$1.3 billion over that period.⁴
11. The teen birth rate for 15-19 year olds in New Mexico decreased by 11% between 1998-2003. The New Mexico Department of Health Family Planning Program and the New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition announce a new challenge: ***Challenge 2010: Reduce the teen birth rate in New Mexico by 15% 2006-2010.***

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Recommendations from the New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition

1. Parents can play a powerful role in preventing teen pregnancy by building a strong relationship with their children that is warm in tone, firm in discipline, and rich in communication. Be attentive without being authoritarian. Support your children's school success and encourage them to set goals for their future. Communicate clearly and often with both sons and daughters about the importance of avoiding a too-early pregnancy.
2. Policy makers must work aggressively to reduce NM's persistently high poverty rate.
3. Educators and policy makers must get serious about insuring that all schools are committed to the success of every student.
4. Communities and schools must implement those interventions that have science-based evidence of success.
5. New Mexican's must unite to deliver a message to our youth that **the teen years are a time for growing up and getting an education – not for childbearing.**

Everyone can help spread the message through their daily activities. We need more involvement from families, religious institutions, social service and health agencies, business, media, government – and teens themselves.

¹ 2006 Kids Count Data Book, State Profiles of Child Well-Being, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

² Emerging Answers, 2001, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org

³ The Economic Cost of Teenage Childbearing and Parenting in New Mexico: New Estimates, 2006, New Mexico Department of Health, Public Health Division – Family Planning Program

⁴ By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing, November 2006, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org