



THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF PROGRESS
IN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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Declining Teen Birth Rates Contribute to Improvements in Child Well-Being in All States

First-Ever State Specific Analysis Released

(Washington, DC) — Declining teen birth rates have significantly improved overall child well-being in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, according to a new state-by-state analysis released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Specifically, declines in the teen birth rate have had a direct impact on improving child poverty in all 50 states. That is, child poverty would have been worse in 2002 if state teen birth rates had not declined between 1991 and 2002.

Between 1991 and 2002, the national teen birth rate declined 30%. State declines in teen births varied between 13% and 44% during the same time period (2002 is the most recent year for which state data are available). This new research asks the question: “What if teen birth rates in each state had *not* declined between 1991 and 2002?” and presents data on seven key measures:

- the *number* of additional children under age 18 who would have been born to teen mothers between 1991 and 2002,
- the additional *number* and *percent* of children under age six who would have been living in poverty in 2002,
- the additional *number* and *percent* of children under age six who would have been living in single mother households in 2002,
- the *percent improvement* in the state’s poverty rate for children under age six in 2002; and
- the *percent improvement* in the proportion of children under age six living in single mother households in 2002.

“National and state investments in teen pregnancy prevention pay huge dividends,” said Sarah Brown, Director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. “As this analysis clearly shows, preventing teen pregnancy is one of the most direct and effective ways states can reduce poverty and improve overall child well-being.”

The ten states that experienced the largest improvements in child poverty as a result of declining teen birth rates are, in order: Connecticut, Vermont, Maryland, Michigan, Maine, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Ohio, California and Massachusetts (tied for 9th). The ten states that saw the greatest improvements in children living with a single mother are, in order: Michigan and Missouri (tied for 1st), New Hampshire, Vermont, California, Massachusetts, Delaware, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Maine.

Despite the impressive strides all states made in reducing the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2002, and the important contribution this progress made to improving the number of children living in poverty and in single parent families during those same years, there is still much work to be done. The U.S. still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy among comparable countries and one in three girls in this country becomes pregnant by age 20. “If all states can continue to bring down teen pregnancy and birth rates, the prospects of this generation of children and the next will greatly improve,” said Brown.

The National Campaign’s new state analysis uses methods developed by the U.S. Congress’ Joint Economic Committee in a report released by the Ways & Means Committee in April 2004. It was made possible by a generous grant from the United Health Foundation.

For more information, including detailed fact sheets and press releases for each state, charts showing state rankings and racial and ethnic breakdowns, and the methodology used in this analysis, visit www.teenpregnancy.org

About the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The National Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported primarily by private donations. Our mission is to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy.

About the United Health Foundation. United Health Foundation was established in 1999 by UnitedHealth Group as a nonprofit, private foundation. Its support of this new research is evidence of United Health Foundation’s commitment to providing information to support the health and medical decisions made by physicians, health professionals, community leaders, and individuals that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. Visit www.unitedhealthfoundation.org for more information.

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