

PROJECT BRIEF

Setting a Goal to Reduce Teen Births in Milwaukee by 2015

Background

Teen pregnancy increases risks to both mother and child, including anemia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, low birth weight, intra-uterine growth retardation, neonatal mortality,¹ poor academic achievement, behavioral problems later in life,² dropping out of school, unemployment, early parenthood, and violent offending.³ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy estimated that in 2004, \$9.1 billion in public funding was expended on the costs associated with teenage childbearing, including increased public sector health care costs, child welfare costs, costs for state prison systems, and lost revenue due to lower taxes paid by children of teen mothers over their own adult lifetimes.⁴ Further, teens themselves recognize the cost of teen childbearing on their relationships, their vocations, and on their own development.⁵

Problem

Teen births (age 19 or younger) account for 16.8% of all Milwaukee births compared to 8.6% of Wisconsin births and 10.2% of U.S. births.⁶ An annual reporting of 15-17-year-old teen birth rates measured progress in reducing teen births in Milwaukee, but until this project, a target goal had not been set.

Goal

The goal of this project was to develop a feasible goal to reduce births for teenagers aged 15-17 years by 2015 for the City of Milwaukee based on historical teen birth data trends.

Methods

Birth counts and birth rates for teenagers aged 15-17 years were obtained from the Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health.⁷ Trend analyses were performed on birth rate data for teenagers for the period 1991 through 2006 in an effort to forecast and set a birth rate goal for the year 2015.

Results/Discussion

Trend analyses yielded a predicted birth rate projection calculated at 35.9 births per 1,000 females. Using the exponential function estimate as well as national and state goals, Milwaukee community leaders set a feasible goal of 30 births per 1,000 teens aged 15-17 years, which represents a 46% reduction by 2015 from the 2006 rate of 55/1,000. The United Way of Greater Milwaukee and the City of Milwaukee Health Department announced this challenging teen pregnancy reduction goal publicly on November 18, 2008.

Community Awards

Milwaukee Health Champion Award was presented to the team at the Center for Urban Population Health by the City of Milwaukee Health Department on June 2, 2010 for outstanding teamwork towards the reduction of teen births in Milwaukee.

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Academic Accomplishments

[Mori, N., Blair, K.A., Salm Ward, T.C., Bergstrom, J., Galvao, L., Cisler, R.A. \(2009\). Setting a Goal to Reduce Teen Births in Milwaukee by 2015. *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 108\(7\), 365-369.](#)

Salm Ward, T.C., Mori, N., Blair, K., Bergstrom, J., Galvao, L., Cisler, R.A. (2009). Setting a Goal to Reduce Teen Births in Milwaukee by 2015. Poster presentation, *Population Health Sciences in Wisconsin and Beyond – Providing Evidence for Clinical Practice and Public Health*, Madison, WI (August 27-28).

Mori, N., Salm Ward, T., Bergstrom, J., Galvao, L., Cisler, R.A., Blair, K. (2008). Assessing Reproductive Health Disparities in Milwaukee: Developing a Goal to Reduce Births for Young Teenagers by 2015. Poster presentation, *Academy for Health Equity 1st Meeting*, Denver, CO (June 26-27).

Partner Organizations

Center for Urban Population Health

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United Way of Greater Milwaukee

References

1. Cunnington AJ. What's so bad about teenage pregnancy? *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care*. 2001 27(1):36-41.
2. Hofferth SL Reid L. Early childbearing and children's achievement and behavior over time. *J Perinat Neonatal Nurs*. 2001 15(2):1-17.
3. Jaffee S, Caspi A, Moffitt T, et al. Why are children born to teen mothers at risk for adverse outcomes in young adulthood? Results from a 20-year longitudinal study. *Dev Psychopathol*. 2001 13:377-397.
4. Hoffman S. *By the numbers: The public costs of teen childbearing*. Washington DC: *The national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy*.
5. Herman JW. Adolescent Perceptions of Teen Births. *J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs*. 2008 37(1):42-50.
6. United Way of Greater Milwaukee. *if truth be told...teen pregnancy, public health and the cycle of poverty*. United Way of Greater Milwaukee: Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 2006.
7. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, DPH, BHIP. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system, <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/>.

*Ms. Blair has since retired from her position at the City of Milwaukee Health Department

The Center for Urban Population Health is a partnership of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Aurora Health Care, Inc. Our mission is advancing population health research and education to improve the health of urban communities.