

## Teen Birth Rates Continue to Decline

The news continues to be very good – teen pregnancy rates and teen birth rates continue to decline. Between 1991 and 2001 the U.S. teen birth rate declined by 27%. New Mexico is also moving in the right direction, although much more slowly. Our teen birth rate declined by only 21% during that same time period.

In 2001, 45 of every 1,000 girls (15-19 years) in the U.S. gave birth. In New Mexico, 63 of every 1,000 (15-19

years) gave birth. New Mexico is currently listed as having the 4<sup>th</sup> highest teen birth rate in the nation. For many years our State has fluctuated between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position, depending on the population estimates available at any given time. Preliminary New Mexico data for 2002 indicates a continued decline to 62.3 per 1,000. There were approximately 4,500 births to NM teens in 2002.

Despite these substantial improvements, not all teens are sharing equally in this progress. Hispanic girls have a *much* higher birth rate than other ethnic/racial groups.

In order to meet our **Challenge 2005: To Reduce Teen Births by 20% by 2005** we're going to have to put the pedal to the metal and pick up some speed! (See Challenge 2005 article on page 2.)

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention — What Works?

New Mexico can't afford to waste limited resources by implementing anything but the *most* promising teen pregnancy prevention interventions. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has done extensive research and evaluation on a variety of programs and has determined that there are four types of programs that have demonstrated clear success in reducing sexual risk-taking among young people.

### 1. Sex and HIV Education Programs

These programs either delay sex, reduce the frequency of sex, reduce the number of sexual partners, increase condom use, or increase contraception. There is currently no evidence that abstinence-only programs have decreased sexual risk taking behavior.

### 2. Clinic Services

Research suggests that key factors for successful clinic services include: one-on-one counseling and instruction, counseling about the clients own behavior, and materials and activities that support and reinforce counseling.

### 3. Service Learning Programs

Successful service learning programs involve voluntary service to the community with structured time for preparation and reflection. Service learning programs show strong evidence that they reduce actual teen pregnancy rates.

### 4. Comprehensive Programs

These comprehensive programs are long-term, intensive, expensive and include the following components: family life and sex education, aca-

demic assessment and support, work-related interventions, self-expression through the arts, sports activities, and comprehensive health care.

Research also informs us that these programs are effective in working with higher risk and Hispanic youth. In fact, the majority of the effective programs have been studied in low-income communities – where many of our most at-risk youth live. Some programs are more effective with males and others demonstrate more success with females. Similarly, some are more effective with sexually inexperienced youth and others with experienced teens.

Based on the research of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition recommends the fol-

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## Teen Pregnancy Prevention

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lowing programs for those of you seeking to implement “best practices” curricula in your school or community. Please contact our office if you would like additional information about specific curricula.

- **Reducing the Risk** – a high school curriculum
- **Making A Difference! An Abstinence-Based Approach to HIV/STD and Teen Pregnancy Prevention** – mid school age curriculum
- **Making Proud Choices: A Safer-Sex Approach to HIV/STDs and Teen Pregnancy Prevention** – high school age curriculum
- **Safer Choices: Preventing HIV, Other STD and Pregnancy** – high school age curriculum
- **Draw the Line/Respect the Line** – middle school age curriculum with Spanish worksheets
- **Teen Outreach Program** - Service Learning Program for mid and high school

For more information about the research and evaluation of effective programs, we recommend the following documents from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Visit their web site at [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)

- *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy*, 2001
- *Do Abstinence-Only Programs Delay the Initiation of Sex Among Young People and Reduce Teen Pregnancy?* 2002
- *Progress Pending: How to Sustain and Extend Recent Reductions in Teen Pregnancy Rates*, 2003

## The Challenge 2005

In early 2000, NMTPC announced the **Challenge 2005: To Reduce Teen Births by 20% by 2005**. Every year since then we announce the counties that are “on target” for achieving their goal. This past May there were 17 counties receiving awards. If your county isn’t on this list, please contact NMTPC for technical assistance so you can join the ranks of these “on target” counties.

Bernalillo County • Chaves County • De Baca County • Eddy County • Guadalupe County • Harding County • Hidalgo County • Los Alamos County • Luna County • McKinley County • Otero County • San Miguel County • Sandoval County • Sierra County • Socorro County • Taos County • Torrance County

Although more than half of New Mexico’s counties are making substantial progress toward a 20% teen birth rate reduction, the State as a whole is *not* “on target” for meeting the challenge. We must all recommit to this work by assessing the types of interventions being use in our communities. Are the most effective programs being implemented? If not, let’s make some changes!

This page contains the latest statistics on New Mexico/County Teen Birth Rates.  
You can access the chart by going to *NMTPC Publications*  
and then to the section called *NM Teen Pregnancy/Birth Rate Statistics*.

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along to someone else.

## Announcing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NMTPC Youth Art & Video Contest



New Mexico youth are invited to create art that helps us promote the message that **it's better for everyone when having a child is postponed until after the teen years.**



**Art:** We are looking for drawings, paintings, or photographs that are no larger than 8-1/2 by 11 inches. Entries will be accepted from individual youth, schools, or organizations. Prize: \$100 – 12 winners will be chosen.

**Video:** We are looking for a short 1-10 minute video. The format can be a documentary, drama, interview or a commercial. Entries must come from a school or youth serving organization. Prize: \$ 500 – 3 winners will be chosen.

Entries must be received no later than March 1, 2004 — so get the word out to teens now! For more details call NMTPC at (505) 254-8737 or get complete contest rules at our web site [www.nmtpc.org](http://www.nmtpc.org)

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