

Utah Health Status Update: Trends in Teen Pregnancy in Utah

Research indicates that bearing a child during adolescence is associated with long-term difficulties for the mother, her child, and society. These consequences are often attributable to the poverty and other adverse socioeconomic circumstances that frequently accompany early childbearing.

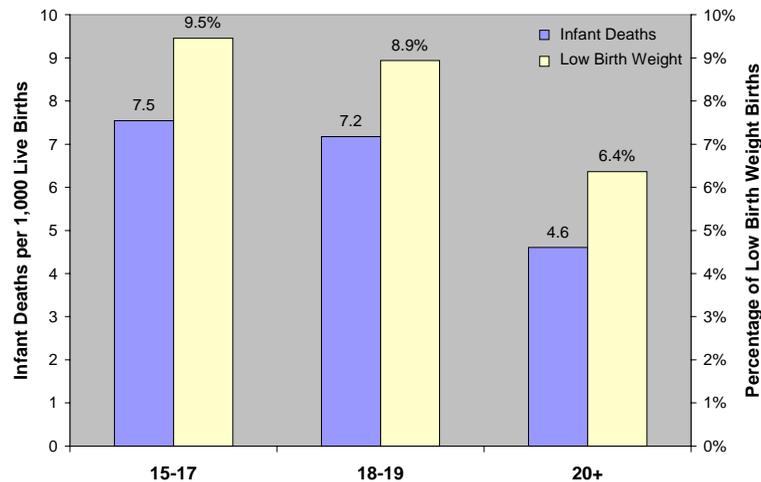
Poor Birth Outcomes

Pregnant teens are especially at risk for a variety of poor outcomes, including:

- Inadequate prenatal care
- Low birth weight and preterm birth
- High maternal and newborn health care costs
- Increased infant mortality and morbidity

Infant Death Rate

Figure 1. Infant death rate and percentage of low birth weight births by mother's age, Utah 1995-2000.



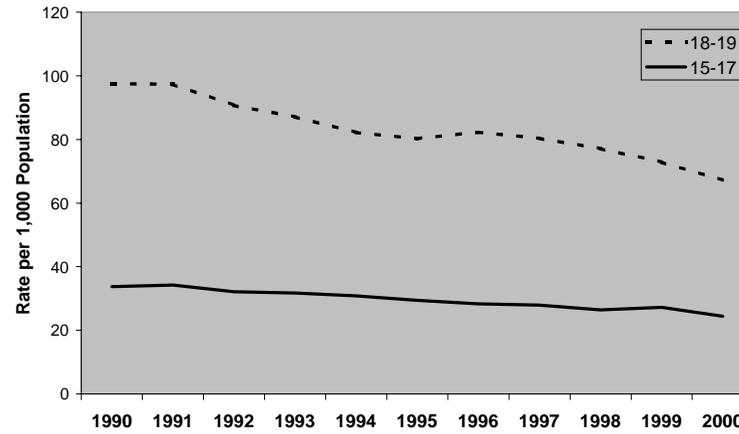
Source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics

A remarkable trend over the past decade has been the steady decline in teen pregnancy, both in Utah and throughout the United

States. The rate of teen pregnancy (defined as births plus abortions and fetal deaths) declined from 60.8 births per 1,000 women 15-19 in 1990 to 43.8 in 2000. Pregnancy rates declined in both the 15-17 and 18-19 year old age groups (Figure 2).

Teen Pregnancy Rates

Figure 2. Pregnancy rate of girls age 15-19 by year and age group, Utah 1990-2000.



"Pregnancies" in this report are defined as the total of births, fetal deaths of 20 weeks or more gestation, and induced abortions. Spontaneous terminations (miscarriages) at less than 20 weeks gestation are excluded. Source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics. Population estimate published 2002 by the Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, and based on Utah Process Economic and Demographic (UPED) model.

Declining Teen Abortion Rate

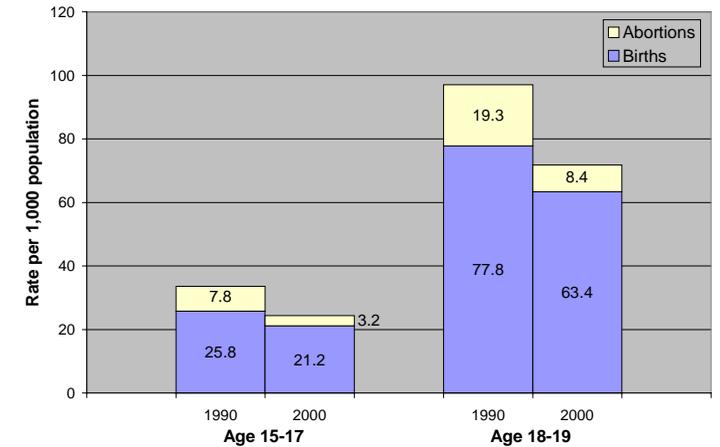
While there were many more teen births than teen abortions, the rate of abortions to teens declined more sharply than the birth rate (Figure 3). By 2000 the abortion rate for teens 15-19 in Utah declined almost 60 % from the 1990 rate. Figure 4 shows the relative contribution of births and abortions to teen pregnancy in Utah's local Health Districts.

Marital Status

Although the overall teen birth rate has been declining, the proportion of teen births to unmarried mothers has increased.

Teen Births and Abortions

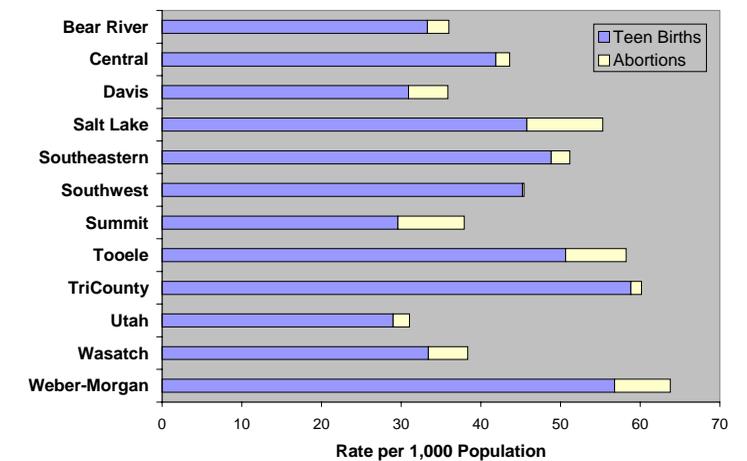
Figure 3. Number of births and abortions per 1,000 girls age 15-19 by year and age group, Utah 1990 and 2000.



Source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics

Teen Births and Abortions by Health District

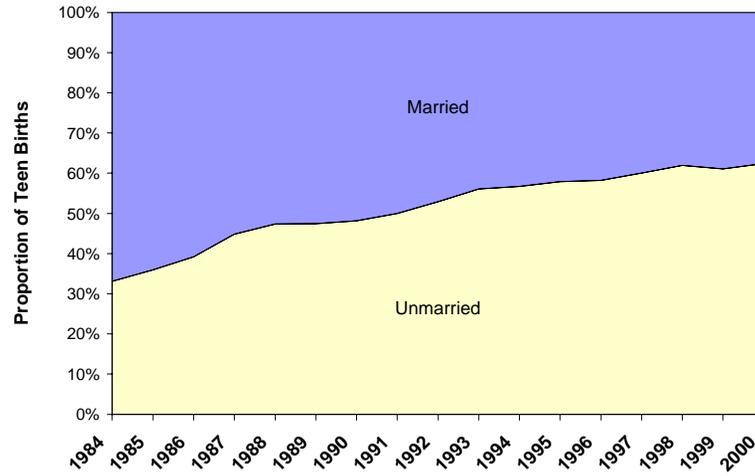
Figure 4. Number of births and abortions per 1,000 girls age 15-19 by local health district, Utah 1998-2000.



Source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics. Population estimate published 2002 by the Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, and based on Utah Process Economic and Demographic (UPED) model.

Live Births by Marital Status

Figure 5. Proportion of live births for females age 15-19 by marital status and year, Utah 1984-2000.



Source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics.

- In 1990 almost two-thirds of teen mothers were married at the time the baby was born.
- In 2000 62% of the births to women 15-19 were to unmarried mothers.

Public Health Interventions

Utah public health agencies promote teen pregnancy prevention and healthier babies for teen parents by:

- Providing teen pregnancy assessment data for local prevention efforts.
- Supporting abstinence education and motivational programs to youth age 10-14.
- Financing prenatal, obstetrical and newborn care.
- Supplementing the nutrition of women, infants and children.

May 2002 Utah Health Status Update

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