



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2009
PH09-042

CONTACT: Al Lundeen
Ken August
(916) 440-7259

CALIFORNIA'S TEEN BIRTH RATE DROPS TO RECORD LOW

SACRAMENTO – The rate of births to teenage mothers in California has declined to its lowest level on record, Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), announced today.

In 2007, the most recent year for which data is available, 53,393 babies were born to females ages 15-19 for a rate of 37.1 births for every 1,000 females. The rate represents a decline from the rate of 37.8 in 2006. Since 1991, California's teen birth rate has declined 48 percent.

“Teenage childbearing presents numerous challenges for both mother and child, including higher risks of medical problems and poverty,” Horton said. “While we recognize there is more work to do, the record low teen birth rate is a significant public health achievement.”

From 1997 to 2007, birth rates decreased among both younger and older teens. The birth rate among 18 and 19-year-olds dropped from 85.5 per 1,000 in 1997 to 64.3 in 2007. The birth rate among teens ages 15-17 decreased from 33.8 per 1,000 in 1997 to 19.9 in 2007.

The rate of births among teens declined among all major ethnic groups except Asian/Pacific Islander, which did not change.

- Hispanic: 65.0, 2006; 61.9, 2007.
- African-American: 40.8, 2006; 40.5, 2007.
- White: 13.9, 2006; 13.6, 2007.
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 10.9, 2006; 10.9, 2007.

“In partnership with community-based organizations and counties, the California Department of Public Health continues to work aggressively on efforts to educate California's teens about avoiding pregnancies in their adolescent years,” said Horton. “Achieving a record low teen birth rate is an important milestone. We look forward to maintaining the downward trend.”

Further information about teen birth rates by county and teen pregnancy prevention programs is available at the CDPH Web site.

www.cdph.ca.gov