



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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Mayor Barrett Announces 13.6 % Drop in Teen Births
Collaborative efforts, education seen as key to success in meeting 2015 goal

MILWAUKEE---For the fourth year in a row Milwaukee has recorded a decrease in the teen birth rate, which is at a historically low level, Mayor Tom Barrett and health officials announced Wednesday. Health Department data show that there were 35.7 births per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years old in 2010. For that age group, the birth rate has decreased from 41.3* in 2009, 46.7 in 2008, 47.1 in 2007, and 52.0 in 2006. Although Hispanic girls and non-Hispanic black girls are still four times more likely than non-Hispanic white girls to give birth as teens, 2010 showed significant declines in every racial and ethnic group.

Officials say the current trend indicates that Milwaukee should be on track to reach its goal of 30 births per 1,000 by 2015, a goal which was announced by United Way of Greater Milwaukee, the Center for Urban Population Health, and the Milwaukee Health Department four years ago.

“All of this community’s hard work is paying off,” said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. “These results are very encouraging, and we should be proud of our accomplishments. Through our collaborative efforts, we are making incredible progress in reducing the teen birth rate.”

The decline is attributed to the unprecedented, all hands-on-deck approach adopted by the Milwaukee community over the past four years since the goal of 30 per 1,000 by 2015 was set. Local businesses, media outlets, healthcare providers, Milwaukee Public Schools, and community-based and faith-based organizations have all joined the effort. A public marketing strategy has kept the issue on people’s minds and met teens where they are with messages that show how getting pregnant as teens negatively affects them. The campaigns have also brought attention to the problems of sexual violence and victimization. The statewide “Family Planning Only Services” program has also been viewed as an important tool in helping to make family planning services available to teens and adults who might otherwise not have access to such services.

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According to Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, “The key point here is: fewer young girls in Milwaukee are getting pregnant. More girls are going to have a better chance of finishing high school and achieving their dreams and life goals. This is good news for our young people, and good news for our community as a whole.”

“When given the facts, young people are able to make better decisions, and we are seeing the results,” said Mary Lou Young, president and CEO, United Way of Greater Milwaukee. “But we still have work to do. We know that both MPS’ and other evidence-based curricula have been a key strategy to achieving these results. It’s important that we maintain this commitment to ensure the numbers continue to decline.”

In 2009, United Way funded the development of a comprehensive human growth and development curriculum for Milwaukee Public Schools. This new age-appropriate and medically-accurate curriculum is taught in all kindergarten through 12th grade classrooms in the district.

*The reported rate last year was based on preliminary numbers that were not yet certified by the state. We initially reported an overall rate of 44.4 for 15-17 year olds. After the State of Wisconsin Vital Records office confirmed the 2009 birth figures for Milwaukee, the rate was adjusted to 41.3.