



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mayor Barrett Announces Milwaukee has met Teen Birth Rate Goal**

*Communitywide collaboration results in city surpassing 2015 goal*

MILWAUKEE – In early 2008, Mayor Tom Barrett, the City of Milwaukee Health Department, and the Center for Urban Population Health set an ambitious goal: To reduce the teen birth rate in the city of Milwaukee 46 percent by 2015. On October 23, 2013, Mayor Barrett and the city’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, led by United Way of Greater Milwaukee, announced that it has met – and surpassed – its goal, three years early.

“Reaching this momentous goal three years early is a testament to what a community can do when we collaborate in all the right ways,” said Mayor Tom Barrett, a member of the city’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee. “Working together, we have made incredible progress in reducing the teen birth rate. We should be proud of what this success means for the future of our young residents and for our community as a whole.”

For the sixth year in a row Milwaukee has recorded a decrease in the teen birth rate. City of Milwaukee Health Department data show that in 2012 there were 25.7 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17, a decrease from 52.0 in 2006. The 2012 rate bested the 2015 goal of 30 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17.

Compared to 2006, the 2012 birth rate for 15- to 17-year-olds in Milwaukee has dropped by 50 percent overall, by 47 percent for non-Hispanic Whites, by 55 percent for non-Hispanic Blacks, and by 56 percent for Hispanics.

Although Hispanic girls and non-Hispanic Black girls remain three to four times more likely than non-Hispanic White girls to give birth as teens, 2012 showed significant declines in both the Hispanic and the non-Hispanic Black groups. A particularly bright spot in the trends is the teen pregnancy rate for non-Hispanic Black 15- to 17-year-olds in Milwaukee, which decreased by a remarkable 31 percent from 2011 to 2012.

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While the non-Hispanic White birth rate for 15- to 17-year-olds increased slightly from 2011 to 2012, health officials stated that the overall trend for this group reflected a steady decline averaging more than six percent per year since 2006. However, health officials also note that rates can fluctuate from year to year, and this shows that there is still room for additional improvement.

“This reinforces the need for continuous, sustained efforts to drive teen birth rates even lower,” added Mayor Barrett.

The City’s decline in teen pregnancy rates is proceeding at a more rapid rate than the decline nationally, according to the latest figures available. Between 2009 and 2010, the national 15- to 17-year-old teen birth rate decreased 11.7 percent; during that same period, Milwaukee’s rate decreased 13.2 percent.

“What these rates mean today is that fewer young women in Milwaukee are getting pregnant and more teens are going to have a better chance of finishing high school and achieving their life goals,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker, who serves as co-chair of the United Way of Greater Milwaukee Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee alongside Elizabeth Brenner, president and publisher of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

“This news is about so much more than a number,” said Nicole Angresano, vice president of community impact at United Way of Greater Milwaukee. “This number represents hundreds of lives that have been changed. All the young people who have chosen to forgo parenthood until adulthood have not only improved their lives but the lives of the children they will someday have when they are better prepared to be parents. The ripple effect of this kind of change is immeasurable.”

The decline is attributed to the continuation of an unprecedented, all-hands-on-deck approach adopted by the Milwaukee community since the goal of 30 births per 1,000 by 2015 was set. The effort is led by the United Way of Greater Milwaukee’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, which brought together a diverse collaborative of community stakeholders that included local businesses, media outlets, health care providers, Milwaukee Public Schools, and community- and faith-based organizations.

“This is truly an amazing accomplishment. When we set the goal back in spring of 2008, we knew it was beyond ambitious. To hit our target three years early is a true testament to the power of community collaboration,” said Mary Lou Young, president and CEO of United Way of Greater Milwaukee “We are so grateful to the dozens of individuals and organizations who have been on the ground doing the work every day for the past several years. Without their determination and commitment we would not be where we are.”

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Along with education efforts, a public marketing strategy has sought to show teens how getting pregnant negatively affects both young men and young women, while encouraging parents to talk to their teens about the issue. The campaigns have also brought attention to the problems of sexual violence and victimization of teens.

\*The State of Wisconsin Vital Records office has not yet confirmed the 2011 or 2012 birth figures for Milwaukee. Therefore, the currently-reported 2011 and 2012 rates are based on preliminary City data that have not yet been certified by the State.

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