

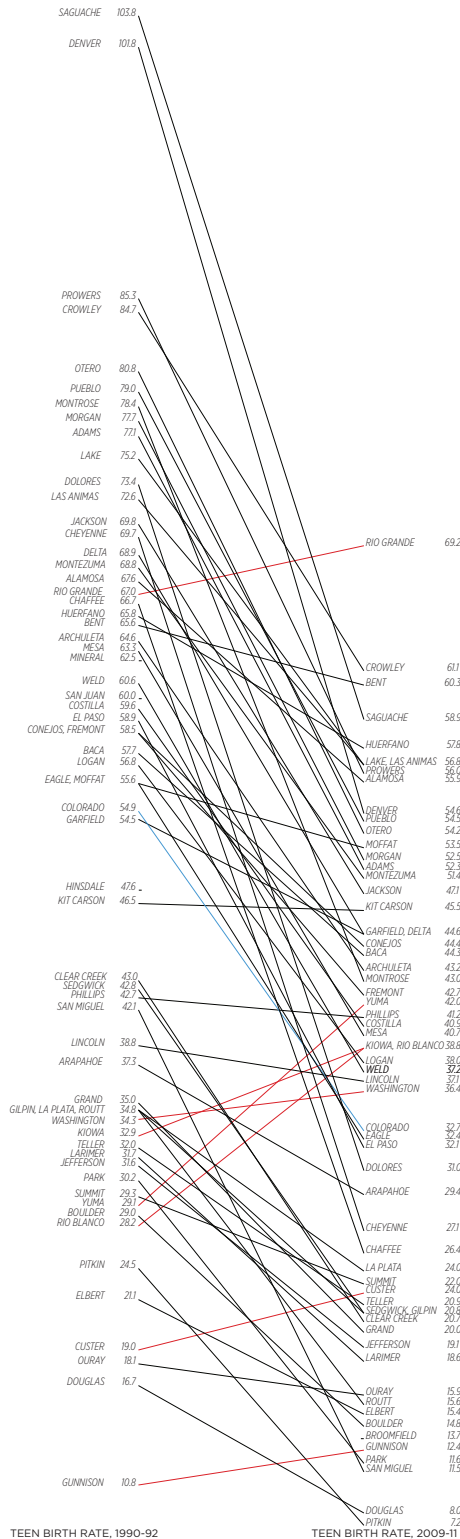


FOCUS ON:

one in a series of 2013 fact sheets on adolescent sexual health
from Colorado Youth Matter

TRENDS IN TEEN BIRTH RATES

TRENDS IN AVERAGE TEEN BIRTH RATES AGES 15-19 BY COLORADO COUNTY, 1990-92 & 2009-11¹



INTRODUCTION

For the last seven years, Colorado Youth Matter has published a summary of relevant, up-to-date statistics on the sexual health of Colorado youth, titled the State of Adolescent Sexual Health in Colorado. This annual report also included a snapshot of how our state has measured up to national trends over time as well as recommendations intended to inform programs and policies that support the health and well-being of all Colorado youth.

Now is the time to explore the data, programs and policies on adolescent sexual health in more depth.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of Colorado Youth Matter, and to celebrate the dramatic progress of advancing adolescent health and information in Colorado over the last two decades, instead of just one report, Colorado Youth Matter is releasing a series of information briefs focused on data, trends and research on adolescent sexual health and the factors influencing this progress.

Focus on: Trends in Teen Birth Rates is the first in the 2013 series of information briefs on the State of Adolescent Sexual Health in Colorado.

IN-DEPTH: TEEN BIRTH RATES IN COLORADO

Over the past 20 years, the teen birth rate in Colorado (ages 15-19) decreased by 49.9% from 55.5 per 1,000 in 1991 to 27.8 per 1,000 in 2011,¹ following the same downward trend as the national teen birth rate which declined by 49%² during the same period. Colorado teen birth rates are the lowest they have ever been since 1990, the earliest year in which data is available. Of the last 20 years of consistent declines in teen birth rates in Colorado, these declines have accelerated over the last five years—Colorado saw a 16% decrease in the teen birth rate in just one year (from 33.1 per 1,000 in 2010 to 27.8 per 1,000 in 2011).¹

In 2011, 4,751 females under the age of 20 gave birth in Colorado—there were 728 fewer births to teens in 2011 than in the previous year.¹ On average in 2011, 13 babies were born to teens in Colorado every day—or about one baby born every 111 minutes.

INEQUALITIES IN TEEN BIRTH RATES:

Average birth rates (2009-2011) for individual counties are shown in these figures. The largest number of births occurs in urban areas where the majority of Colorado adolescents reside. However, rural Colorado counties account for a large majority of the counties with birth rates higher than the state average.¹

RECOMMENDATION:

Supporting the health of youth across Colorado is important. Comprehensive sexuality education provides young people accurate, age-appropriate information and skill building tools to help make better choices. Comprehensive sexual health programs encourage students to postpone sexual activity until they are older, and promote safer-sex practices among those who choose to be sexually active. It has been proven effective at delaying first intercourse and increasing use of contraception among already sexually active youth. These programs have not been shown to initiate early sexual activity, or to increase levels of sexual activity or numbers of sexual partners among sexually active youth.³

IN CONCLUSION:

Significant progress has been made in reducing the number and rate of teen births and improving adolescent sexual health outcomes in Colorado. Now is the time to explore in depth the factors influencing the progress on adolescent sexual health, learn lessons from the successes and challenges, and continue to make gains to advance the health and well-being of all teens.

REFERENCES:

¹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) 2012. Teen birth data provided to Colorado Youth Matter, December, 2012, from the Health Statistics Section.

² Hamilton, B.E., Martin, J.A., & Ventura, S.J. (2012). Births: preliminary data for 2011. National Vital Statistics Reports 61(5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

³ Kirby, Douglas. (2007). Emerging Answers 2007: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE COUNTY TEEN BIRTH RATES ACROSS COLORADO COUNTIES (ages 15-19)¹

