Teen Pregnancy Rate Falls to All-Time Low in Minnesota

By Erik Lief — June 8, 2018

The message of avoiding the perils of teenage parenthood is getting through loud and clear in Minnesota.

Continuing a positive trend that’s in its third decade, pregnancy rates in the state for teens aged 15 to 19 have again fallen, dropping 5% from 2015 to 2016 to a level never before reached. And since 1990 the teen pregnancy rate has plummeted nearly 71%, according to a report released Thursday by the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Meanwhile, the teen birth rate for this age group also continues to fall, down 8% for this 12-month period and drastically lower by 65% since 1990. This drop basically mirrors the overall teenage birth rate decline in the United States, which in 2016 reached a record low of 20.3 births per 1000. Since 1991, nationally, the birth rate for this age group has dropped 67%.

"Minnesota youth should be commended for their positive decision making related to their sexual
health," said Jill Farris, Director of Adolescent Sexual Health Training and Education for the medical school's Healthy Youth Development - Prevention Research Center. "Continued declining rates of teen pregnancy, especially among youth of color, is a positive step for Minnesota youth."

However, the landscape also includes some troubling news, with the incidence of sexually transmitted infections continuing to rise, and with this finding: "adolescents ages 15-19 accounted for 25% of chlamydia and 18% of gonorrhea cases in 2017."

Even though the news about declining rates for this demographic across the country has been encouraging – where historic lows were reached in 2016 – on a global scale the U.S. continues to have among the highest adolescent pregnancy and birth rates among developed nations.

"The U.S. adolescent birth rate is five times higher than Denmark, Japan and the Netherlands," the report states, "nearly seven times higher than Switzerland and ten times higher than South Korea."

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