



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 23, 2011

Teen Birth Rates Fall, But STDs Are Soaring, Abstinence Proponent Warns

According to the latest numbers from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there were 34.3 births per 1,000 teenagers aged 15-19 in 2010, a drop of nine percent from the previous year and the lowest rate in nearly 70 years of data collection. Reported



“It was really a dramatic one-year decrease,” Bill Albert, spokesman for the [National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](#), told Reuters, adding that teen pregnancy rates have dropped 44 percent since a 1991 high. “That is extraordinary progress on an issue that many consider intractable and inevitable.”

Valerie Huber, executive director of the [National Abstinence Education Association](#), said the recorded drop is “impressive but not entirely surprising,” given another recent CDC report showing that 75 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds are remaining abstinent. “When data shows the majority of teens are choosing to be abstinent, a decrease in pregnancy rates is to be expected and we are very encouraged by the positive choices teens are making,” she said.

Huber added, however, that the positive news is tempered by yet another CDC report indicating that rates of certain STDs among all age groups — including teens — is soaring. Perhaps most alarming to Huber were numbers showing that chlamydia rates have increased 24 percent since 2006 — the highest in 20 years — with most of the cases being found among teenage African-American girls. “Simply curbing teen pregnancy is a short-sighted goal that ignores the larger issue of teen sexual activity that must be addressed,” she said. “Just because pregnancy is prevented does not mean that STDs are prevented, as these reports illustrate. The myth of ‘protected sex’ is clearly exposed by the high prevalence of STDs in teens and falls tragically short of what is the healthiest message.”

She pointed out that much of what is being passed off as sex ed — and which is touted by the Obama administration — “is almost solely focused on teen pregnancy prevention” at the expense of abstinence. “So when they release these twin reports, but only one gets the headlines, it supposedly shows their teen pregnancy programs are successful. It’s great that birth rates are down, but it’s when teen sexual activity rates drop that we’ll get real prevention. This shows me that the current policy is not taking care of the problem.”

She said that efforts to merely reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy miss the main point of getting kids to stop having sex entirely. “Only an approach that helps teens avoid all the risk associated with sexual decision-making will adequately address the myriad of potential consequences related to teen sexual activity,” she said.



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