Teen Births in the United States
Teen birth rates continue to decline nationally. Rates dropped from 41.5 per 1,000 girls age 15-19 (2007)2, to 22.3 per 1,000 (2015).3 While rural teen births account for only about 20% of all U.S. teen births, in 2015, the teen birth rate in rural counties (30.9 per 1,000) continued to exceed rates in both medium/small urban counties (24.3 births per 1,000) and large urban counties (18.9 per 1,000) across the nation.5

Teen births cost U.S. taxpayers (federal, state, and local) at least $9.4 billion dollars in 2010.6 Economic and Social Impact
According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy:7

• Fifty-one percent (51%) of girls who become teen mothers get a high school diploma by the age of 22.5
• Nearly two-thirds (67%) of teen mothers who live on their own are living in poverty.
• Less than one quarter (24%) of teen mothers receive any child support payments.

Infant health
More teen mothers report smoking during pregnancy and delayed prenatal care; factors that may increase their risk of a preterm or low birthweight infant. Higher rates of infant mortality are also associated with teen births.9

Children of teen mothers may have more difficulties in school and are twice as likely to experience child abuse and neglect as compared to children of older mothers.10 Fewer teens receive early prenatal care as compared to women aged 20 or older. Their infants are at higher risk of low birthweight and infant mortality than infants of older women.9

Teen Births in Wyoming
Teen births account for only 7.3% of the total births in Wyoming (Figure 1), yet in 2010, teen births cost taxpayers about $20 million.6 Wyoming teen birth rates declined by nearly half (47%) between 2007 (49.6 births per 1,000) and 2016 (26.2 births per 1,000).11

While substantial progress has been made, Wyoming’s teen birth rate is higher than the U.S. 2016 provisional rate of 20.3 births per 1,000 girls.12

The percent of teen births varies by race and ethnicity (Figure 2) and when compared to adults (Figure 3), teen mothers in Wyoming were more often:

• First-time mothers
• Not married
• Enrolled in WIC and or Medicaid during their pregnancy

Figure 1. Percent of births by age

Figure 2. Wyoming Teen Births (Age 15-19) by Race and Ethnicity

Figure 3. Demographic Characteristics of Teen & Adults Births, WY PRAMS 2012-2015
The Health Impact of Teen Births

Babies born to teen moms in Wyoming have a higher risk of being born too small (low birthweight, at <2,500 grams) and have an increased risk of infant mortality (not living until their first birthday) as compared to babies of older moms. However, no difference was observed for smoking during the third trimester of pregnancy when compared to older moms. Smoking during pregnancy affects both birthweight and gestational age at birth.

Early and appropriate prenatal care leads to better birth outcomes for women of all ages. Reducing the number of teen pregnancies in Wyoming improves the health of women, infants, and communities.

Fewer teens initiate and continue breastfeeding until at least 8 weeks after birth. Teens report higher rates of smoking before pregnancy, which affects birthweight and gestational age at birth. Smoking during pregnancy is associated with a higher risk of low birthweight and other adverse outcomes for infants.

Figure 4 provides data from Wyoming PRAMS (2012-2015) on health behaviors before, during, and after pregnancy among teens and adult women.

Health Behaviors Among Teens & Adults

What is PRAMS?
The Wyoming Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a surveillance project of the Wyoming Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Wyoming PRAMS collects Wyoming-specific, population-based data on maternal attitudes and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy.

The goal of the PRAMS project is to improve the health of mothers and infants by reducing adverse outcomes such as low birth weight, infant mortality and morbidity, and maternal morbidity.


References
1. Teen Birth Rate Definition: The number of births to females aged 15-19 per 1,000 females aged 15-19.