



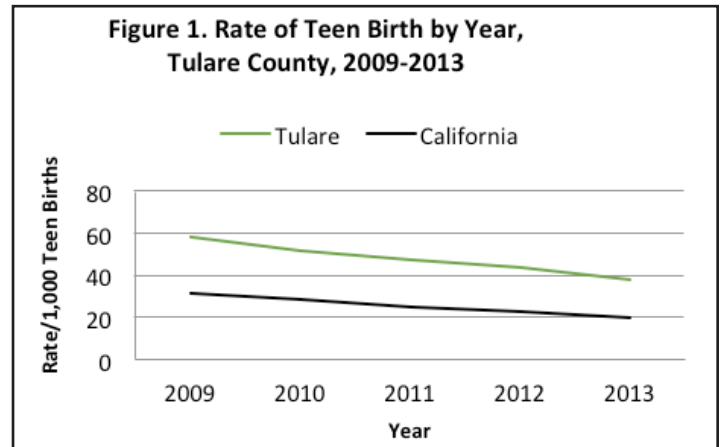
Adolescent Health in the San Joaquin Valley: *Individual and Neighborhood Factors in Tulare County*

Background and Implications

Promoting healthy pregnancies and births while reducing teen pregnancies are key objectives for public health. Research indicates that early investment into initiatives tackling these issues improve the health and well-being of all individuals. This report examines current trends in teen pregnancy, how teen births are related to individual and neighborhood factors in Tulare County, and the costs associated with these health outcomes.

Summary of Findings

Social determinants such as socioeconomic status and employment opportunity are negatively associated with teen births. Figure 1 illustrates that Tulare County has a higher teen birth rate than the state. However, the county has reduced teen births at a rate similar to the state. A 34% decline in teen (females ages 15 - 19) births from 2009 to 2013 was found in Tulare County. In 2009, the rate was 58/1,000 compared to a rate of 38/1,000 in 2013. The county saw a total of 5,155 teenage births between 2009 and 2013. Latinas account for 79% of teen births, but only compose 62% of the general population.



The prevention of teen pregnancy provides a cost benefit for youth and the community as a whole. Table 1 shows conservative estimates of costs to taxpayers due to teen birth. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy estimates that the average cost of a teen birth is \$1,462. By reducing the rate of teen births, Tulare County has saved 34% of the costs in 2013 compared to 2009.

Table 1. Total Costs to Taxpayers Associated with Teen Childbearing by Year, Tulare County

Year	Rate ^a of Teen Births	Total Costs of Teen Childbearing ^b	% Decline in Teen Birth Rate Compared to Previous Year	Cumulative Savings Due to Decline Teen Birth Rate
2009	58	\$1,843,582	-	-
2010	52	\$1,640,364	10	\$203,218
2011	47	\$1,488,316	10	\$355,266
2012	43	\$1,377,204	9	\$466,378
2013	38	\$1,206,150	12	\$637,432

^a rate per 1,000 live births

^b based on average cost of teen birth in California \$1,462 (2010)

Tulare County currently has a number of initiatives aimed at reducing teen pregnancy and improving teen-pregnancy-related health outcomes, especially through four programs in particular, the Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP), the California Personal Responsibility Education Program (CA PREP), the Cal-Learn Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

AFLP (Adolescent Family Life Program)

For teenagers who are parents or will soon become parents, the Adolescent Family Life Program is there to help them and their babies get off to a good start and stay on the path to a bright future. The program reaches out to teens (girls up to age 18, boys up to age 20) who are pregnant or already parenting.

Teens work with a social service worker who provides guidance and resources, including services ranging from transportation to school or medical appointments to referrals to a Public Health Nurse when necessary or access to reproductive health education and services. Goals of the program are to help the young parents give birth to a healthy baby, complete their education, avoid future unplanned pregnancies, and develop good parenting skills.

California Personal Responsibility Education Program (CA PREP)

The CA PREP program educates Tulare County youth most at risk for unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by using evidence-based program models to educate them on the risks of not practicing either sexual abstinence or safer sex. The program also prepares youth for adulthood by teaching them about healthy relationships and development of self-esteem, imbuing them with healthy attitudes and values, and teaching life skills such as goal-setting, decision making, negotiation, communication, interpersonal skills, and stress management. These models have proven to help adolescents delay sexual initiation, reduce the number of sexual partners, and avoid unwanted pregnancies. The program also ensures that youth have access to reproductive health services, as appropriate.

Cal-Learn

Cal-Learn is a program targeting teens in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. Teens who are under 19 years of age, who are pregnant or parenting a child, and who have not completed high school or its equivalent are

eligible to receive health and social services as well as incentives designed to help them obtain their high school diploma (or equivalent). The program helps teens who have started parenting early in life to attain financial independence and form healthy families.

WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)

Although WIC is designed to help all pregnant women, new mothers, and young children eat well and stay healthy, it has an important role to play for pregnant teens and their unborn children. WIC services can be especially important for teen mothers who may lack the education and resources to maintain good nutrition during pregnancy on their own. The services help to ensure that poor nutrition does not contribute to negative pregnancy outcomes such as low birth weight or complications during pregnancy or birth. WIC also ensures that infants in the early stages of their life have access to good nutrition which is so vital for establishing a healthy childhood. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and social services. WIC also provides special checks that can be used to buy nutritious foods at many local stores. Online nutrition education is also available. There are nine WIC sites located throughout Tulare County to serve both women and children, and the programs provides assistance to approximately 28,000 clients per month on average.

What Are Future Goals for Teen Health Outcomes?

Tulare County Public Health Department hopes to develop partnerships with the community to educate teens and continue to reduce the number of teen births. We are currently conducting a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in partnership with community stakeholders and the Public Health Institute (PHI). The process includes extensive public engagement and forging strong relationships with community partners which will allow us both to develop new initiatives and improve existing ones throughout the county.