

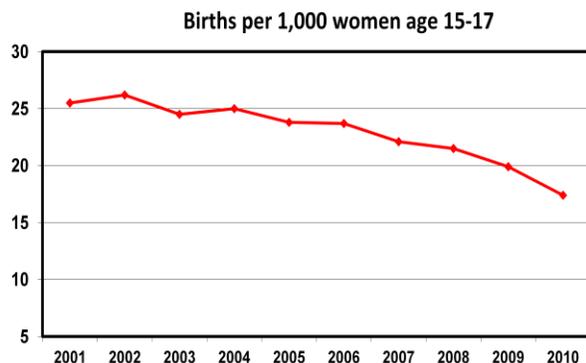
# Unintended Pregnancy

Nearly half of all pregnancies in Colorado are unintended, defined as pregnancies occurring sooner than desired, or occurring when no pregnancy is desired at any time. Women under the age of 25, with a high school education or less, who are African-American or Hispanic/Latina, or are classified as low-income are more likely to have an unintended pregnancy. Teen birth rates in the United States have been steadily declining; yet, U.S. rates remain the highest of any developed country.

## Why is this important?

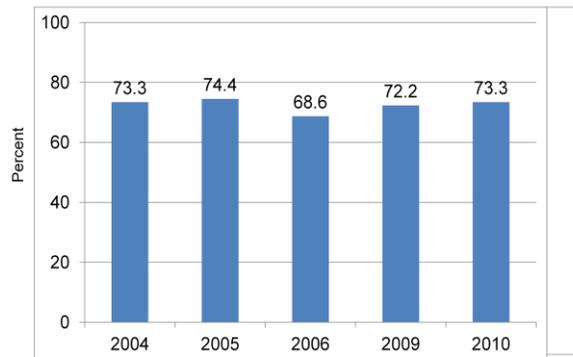
Unintended pregnancy stretches the state budget, costing Medicaid in Colorado more than \$160 million annually. Nationally, for every public dollar spent on prevention, \$3.74 is saved in Medicaid costs. Unintended pregnancies are linked to late entry into prenatal care, birth defects, low birth weight, elective abortions, maternal depression, reduced rates of breastfeeding and increased risk of physical violence during pregnancy. Teen mothers are less likely than their peers to earn a high school diploma or GED. Children born as a result of an unintended pregnancy are more likely to experience child abuse, poor mental and physical health, lower educational attainment and behavioral problems.

## Where are we?



Source: Vital Statistics, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Colorado adults ages 18-44 years old using an effective method\* of birth control, 2004-2010



\*Effective methods includes tubal ligation, vasectomy, hysterectomy, oral contraceptive, injectable contraceptive, contraceptive patch, contraceptive ring, contraceptive implant or IUD  
Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

## Where do we want to be?

By 2016,

- reduce the number of young women ages 15-17 who give birth from 20 women out of every 1,000 to 16 or fewer per 1,000;
- increase from 73 percent to 80 percent the percentage of sexually active adults ages 18-44 using an effective method of birth control;
- increase from 26 percent to 30 percent the percentage of sexually active high school students using an effective method of birth control.

### ★ Colorado's 10 Winnable Battles ★

Clean Air   Clean Water   Infectious Disease Prevention   Injury Prevention  
Mental Health and Substance Abuse   Obesity   Oral Health   Safe Food   Tobacco   Unintended Pregnancy

## What is being done?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment approaches unintended pregnancy prevention in Colorado with a variety of strategies including:

- improving access to affordable, effective and easy-to-use contraceptive methods by providing quality, subsidized family planning services to an estimated 68,250 clients each year, 89 percent of which are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level;
- providing funding and outreach for long-acting contraceptive methods to Title X family planning clinics;
- collaborating on a statewide outreach campaign and interactive website to promote unintended pregnancy prevention;
- supporting local communities in implementing a comprehensive, statewide youth sexual health plan that combines positive youth development strategies (e.g., connecting youth with supportive/caring adults) with the provision of accurate, age-appropriate and evidence-based sexual health education in schools and communities, as well as access to clinical reproductive health services;
- promoting use of the Colorado Preconception and Contraception Clinical Guidelines in health care settings serving women and men of reproductive age;
- contributing to the body of knowledge supporting “life plan” tools and counseling through evaluation of a “life plan” tool; and
- providing training on effective contraceptive methods, family planning services, positive youth development strategies, preconception health and life planning to health care providers and communities.

## High-risk groups

Women more likely to have an unintended pregnancy include those who

- are under the age of 25;
- have a high school education or less;
- are unmarried;
- are African-American or Hispanic/Latina;
- have a yearly income less than \$24,000;
- qualify for Medicaid for prenatal care and delivery.

## Underlying causes

Women may experience unintended pregnancies due to

- lack of access to affordable, effective and easy-to-use contraceptive methods;
- improper use of an effective contraceptive method due to misunderstanding or human error;
- hassle and inconvenience of obtaining or using certain contraceptive methods;
- ambivalence toward pregnancy;
- lack of awareness or education about unintended pregnancies and prevention strategies;
- cultural norms and attitudes that promote childbearing;
- relationship violence;
- lack of control over reproductive decision-making.

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