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Background

Family planning services have been available in Colorado for more than 40 years. In 2008, grant funding was awarded to The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Family Planning Program to expand family planning services including distribution of long-acting reversible contraception as part of existing programs. These contraceptive methods are proven to be safe and effective for women, but are quite expensive, making it difficult for women to access. However, when the cost barrier is removed, women choose these methods of contraception because of reliability and effectiveness. Colorado's experience shows that long-acting reversible contraception is effective at reducing the birth rate, reducing the abortion rate and reducing dependence on government programs.

- Since the start of the LARC project, the birth rate for young women ages 15 to 19 was reduced by more than half, falling 54 percent between 2009 and 2016. The rate dropped from 37.5 births per 1,000 teens in 2009 to 17.1 in 2016.
- A similar downward trend was seen among women ages 20 to 24, with their birth rates dropping 30 percent between 2009 and 2016.
- The number of repeat teen births (teens giving birth for the second or third time, etc.) dropped by nearly two-thirds (63 percent) between 2009 and 2016.
- The abortion rate among women ages 15 to 19 fell by 64 percent and among women ages 20 to 24 by 41 percent between 2009 and 2016.
- The average age of first birth increased by 1.5 years among all women between 2009 and 2016, from 25.9 years to 27.4 years.
- The reductions in teen and unintended pregnancies help the state avoid between \$66,063,664 and \$69,625,751 in entitlement program costs. (2010-2014). This is the total entitlement program costs avoided for Colorado women ages 15-24 and their infants over the five-year period (2010 through 2014 inclusive), due to pregnancies averted through the Colorado Family Planning Initiative.

CDPHE acknowledges that social, economic, and environmental inequities result in adverse health outcomes and have a greater impact than individual choices. Reducing health disparities through systems change can help improve opportunities for all Coloradans.

For more information:

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