

TEEN PREGNANCY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

BACKGROUND:

Teen pregnancy is an issue which concerns many Americans. In the United States, there were 305,388 babies born to mothers aged 15 years to 19 years old for the year 2013. Certain medical problems, for example, pregnancy-induced high blood pressure and preeclampsia (a dangerous medical condition that combines high blood pressure with excess protein in the urine) tend to occur more frequently with teen births than with women in their 20's or 30's. Teen mothers are also more likely to give birth prematurely and have babies with low birth weight, both of which increases the baby's risk of health and developmental problems. Teen mothers are also more likely to suffer from postpartum depression than women who have given birth in their 20's and 30's.

Issues more likely to plague teen mothers include social, educational, and financial. The loss of education also has an effect on wage potential of the women later in life. The cost to pregnant teens is high over an extended period of time. The overall cost to the California taxpayer is estimated to be over one billion dollars annually.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

Teen pregnancy is a significant issue with serious impacts to the community. Tulare County has consistently been in the top three counties in the State for high teen pregnancy rates. It is for this reason the 2014-2015 Tulare County Grand Jury decided to investigate various public agencies within the County in regards to teen pregnancy programs.

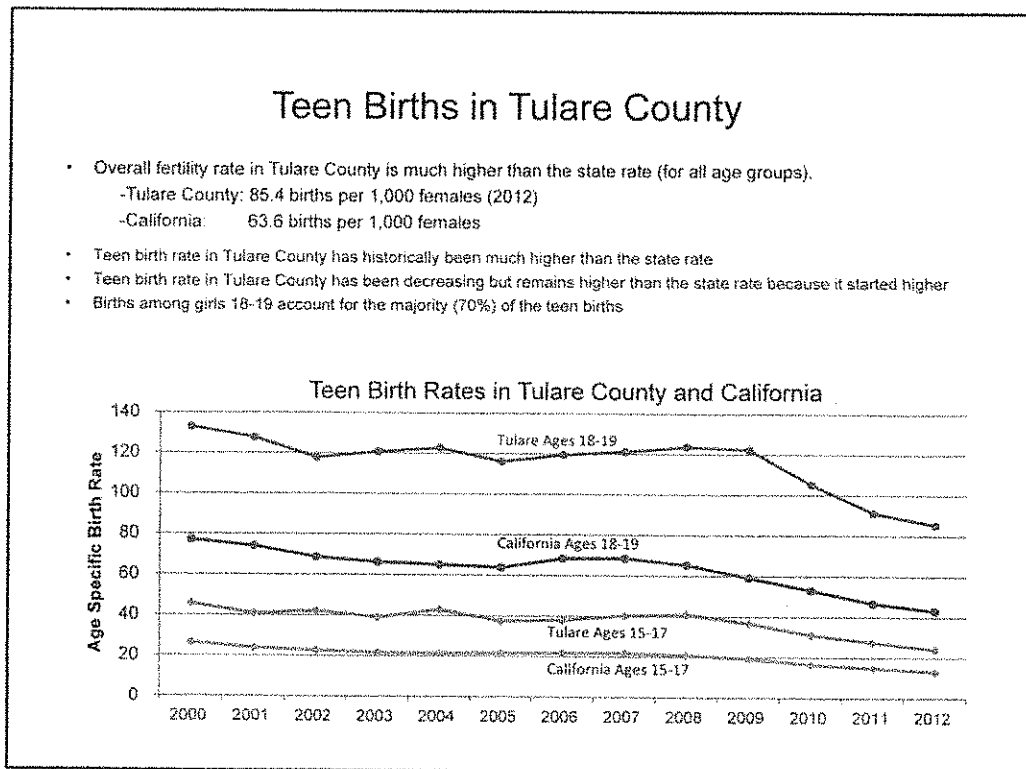
METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

The Grand Jury reviewed the following aspects of teen pregnancy: assistance available for pregnant teens, effectiveness of teen pregnancy programs, teen pregnancy impact on school attendance and educational programming, and pregnancy prevention.

The Grand Jury reviewed numerous documents provided by local agencies, newspapers and other media sources, and via internet websites. These documents provided statistics, program details, resources, and other relevant information. Staff members from different branches of the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency were interviewed. Representatives from the Tulare County Office of Education were also interviewed. Members of the Grand Jury visited various middle and high schools within Tulare County, interviewing staff and reviewing various educational materials.

FACTS:

1. Nationally, half of teenage mothers will not graduate high school. According to information from the U.S. Census Bureau, high school graduates annually earn \$10,386 more than those who drop out of school. Finding a job is harder for high school dropouts, with a nearly four percent (4%) higher unemployment rate as of September 2012.
2. Approximately two percent (2%) of women who have a baby before age 18 will obtain a college degree by age 30.
3. The San Joaquin Valley region has the highest teen pregnancy rates (15-19 years of age) in California with Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties consistently fluctuating between first, second, and third place.
4. Tulare County had the second-highest teen pregnancy rate in the State of California during 2013, with 64 births per 1,000 female population 15-19 years of age.
5. Tulare County's teen pregnancy rate has been steadily dropping with the rest of California over the last several years. Statewide, teen pregnancy rates have dropped approximately in half over the last 20 years.
6. The pregnancy rate for 18-19 year old teens (adults) in Tulare County is significantly higher than the state average. The rate for the 15-17 years age range (minors) is closer to the state average (see chart).



HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES AGENCY (HHSA) PROGRAMS

7. The Cal-Learn Program serves welfare recipients under 19 years of age who are custodial parents or pregnant. The purpose is to encourage teen parents to stay in or return to high school or an equivalent program and earn a diploma or its equivalent.
8. Cal-Learn is a mandatory program for those who are under 19 years of age, receive cash assistance through Cal-WORKS, are pregnant or reside with his or her child in the same qualifying family, and have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent.
9. The Cal-Learn Program provides financial incentives to those who stay on the program. These financial incentives will be removed if the participant drops out.
10. The Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) is available to pregnant or parenting teens. Goals of AFLP are to help the young parents give birth to a healthy baby, complete their education, avoid future unplanned pregnancies, and develop good parenting skills.
11. AFLP is offered to girls up to age 18 and boys up to age 20. Teens work with a Social Service Worker who provides guidance and resources.
12. The HHSA has an outreach program to help those with perinatal depression. There are effective and well-researched options for treatment available to teen mothers. The most common complication from childbirth is perinatal depression. Often referred to as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy or up to 12 months after childbirth and are experienced by women regardless of age.
13. For Fiscal Year 2013-2014, there were a total of 269 pregnant teens on the Medi-Cal program in Tulare County. Of these, 192 were 18 to 19 years of age and 77 were 15 to 17 years of age.
14. For Fiscal Year 2013-2014, there were a total of 203 pregnant teens which were recipients of the CalFresh program in Tulare County. Of these, 150 were 18 to 19 years of age and 53 were 15 to 17 years of age.
15. For Fiscal Year 2013-2014, there were a total of five Foster Care recipients who had been pregnant. Three were age 17, one was age 18, and one was age 19. None were 15-16 years of age. As of this writing, there are no pregnant teens in the Foster Care program.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION (GENERAL):

16. A \$357,000 sex education grant was given to seven organizations in the San Joaquin Valley by the state in 2014, was shared between Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties. The goal of the funding was to reduce teen pregnancy rates through education.
17. Teen pregnancy rates at Orosi High School are reported to have dropped 50% from 2010 to 2014 with teen pregnancy awareness outreach funded by grant awards.

18. California Education Code 51933 states, "school districts may provide comprehensive sexual health education". California Education Code 51934 states, "...all pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, receive HIV/AIDS prevention education ...at least once...in middle school and at least once in high school."

TULARE COUNTY SCHOOL SURVEYS:

19. All the schools visited by the Tulare County Grand Jury met the California State requirement to teach HIV/AIDS prevention once in middle school and once in high school.
20. The classroom teachers or Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) staff taught the HIV/AIDS lessons after receiving at least two days of training by TCOE.
21. Parents are notified by a school letter prior to starting an HIV/AIDS and sexual education unit in the classroom.
22. All parents are given a choice whether their student should take the class.
23. The curriculum was decided by the local school board. The following HIV/AIDS instruction was implemented at some of the schools the Grand Jury visited:
 - a. Positive Prevention HIV/STD Prevention for California Youth
 - b. Focus on Youth
 - c. Making Proud Choices
 - d. Making a Difference
 - e. American Red Cross/Center for Disease Control
24. The following teen pregnancy prevention programs were in place at the schools the Grand Jury visited:
 - a. Positive Prevention Plus Supplemental Program
 - b. Choices Prevention Program
 - c. Health Science Adolescent Center for Disease Control
 - d. California State National Health Standards
 - e. Safe – Jim Sullivan Prevention Program
25. When asked by the Grand Jury, school personnel outlined factors which seem to affect the teenage pregnancy issue:
 - a. Limited Education - Student Dropouts

- b. Family Structure – Single Parents, Drug or Alcohol Issues
 - c. Economics – Below poverty level
 - d. Social Media – Movies, Internet usage, etc.
 - e. Television Programs – “Teen Mom” and “16 and Pregnant”
26. School personnel identified a wide disparity in race and ethnicity, with rates among both African Americans and Hispanic teens remaining twice as high as other ethnic groups.
27. School personnel interviewed by the Grand Jury expressed their concerns that not enough parents were talking to their teenagers about pregnancies because they felt uncomfortable discussing the topic. Therefore, these parents felt the schools should handle this topic because of the training teachers received in that specific area.
28. School staff indicated that they did not provide counseling to young women facing an unintended pregnancy. School personnel did encourage the young women to talk to their parents and to stay in school.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The majority of teen pregnancies in Tulare County are occurring with mothers 18-19 years of age. While still included in teen demographics, this age group is also considered adults.
- F2. While having a significantly higher rate than the state average, teen pregnancy rates have been steadily dropping in Tulare County.
- F3. The HHSA has numerous programs in place for pregnant teens and teen mothers. The majority of these programs assist teens after they are pregnant. Less focus was apparent in teen pregnancy prevention.
- F4. Although it may be difficult to prove a direct link, it is widely recognized that economic inequality, social marginalization and other structural factors affect teens’ sexual behavior patterns. How these behaviors are linked with teens’ race or ethnicity, educational achievements or family income is difficult to prove.
- F5. There was a wide disparity in race and ethnicity, with rates among both African Americans and Hispanic teens remaining twice as high as among other ethnic groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Increased coordination between public agencies within Tulare County involved with the teen pregnancy issue.
- R2. School Districts increase outreach for educating parents on more direct participation on the teen pregnancy issue.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

- 1. Tulare County Office of Education
- 2. Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Section 924.2 and 929).

Tulare County Office of Education

Committed to Students, Support and Service

June 25, 2015

Jim Vidak
County
Superintendent
of Schools

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The Honorable Judge Hillman
County Civic Center, Room 303
221 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia CA 93291

Tulare County Board of Supervisors
2800 W. Burrel Avenue
Visalia CA 93291

Tulare County Grand Jury
5963 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia CA 93277

RESPONSES TO 2015 TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORTS

Enclosed is the following:

1. **Teen Pregnancy Education and Awareness**

We extend our gratitude to the Tulare County Grand Jury for their diligent efforts in compiling these reports. Our responses to your recommendations include information gained through extensive research.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jim Vidak
Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

JV:mm

Enclosure

May 12, 2015

The Honorable Judge Hillman
County Civic Center, Room 303
221 S. Mooney Boulevard
Visalia CA 93291

Tulare County Grand Jury
5963 S. Mooney Boulevard
Visalia CA 93277

Tulare County Board of Supervisors
2800 W. Burrel Ave
Visalia CA 93291

Subject: Written Response of the **Tulare County Office of Education** pursuant to
California Penal Code § 933(c)
Report Name: **Teen Pregnancy Education and Awareness**

FINDINGS

F1. The majority of teen pregnancies in Tulare County are occurring with mothers. 18-19 years of age. While still included in teen demographics, this age group is also considered adults.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools agree with this finding.

F2. While having a significantly higher rate than the state average, teen pregnancy rates have been steadily dropping in Tulare County.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools agree with this finding.

F3. The HHSA has numerous programs in place for pregnant teens and teen mothers. The majority of these programs assist teens after they are pregnant. Less focus was apparent in teen pregnancy prevention.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools agree with this finding.

F4. Although it may be difficult to prove a direct link, it is widely recognized that economic inequality, social marginalization and other structural factors affect teens' sexual behavior patterns. How these behaviors are linked with teens' race or ethnicity, educational achievements or family income is difficult to prove.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools agree with this finding.

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F5. There was a wide disparity in race and ethnicity, with rates among both African Americans and Hispanic teens remaining twice as high as among other ethnic groups.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Increased coordination between public agencies within Tulare County involved with the teen pregnancy issue.

Response: The Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) School Health Program offers professional development workshops on a quarterly basis to school nurses throughout Tulare, Kings, Kern, and Fresno counties. Presentations regarding teen pregnancy resources have been held on numerous occasions and will continue in the future. We will plan to coordinate an updated presentation with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) for our professional development workshop offered in September, 2015. When school nurses become aware of pregnant teens, they are referred to appropriate resources. TCOE will strive to increase linkages between teen pregnancy prevention programs by continuing to increase communication and coordination.

The TCOE CHOICES Program currently operates a multitude of school-site prevention programs in coordination with Tulare County school districts that educate students on the effects of alcohol and other drugs and how it relates the increase of adolescent pregnancy. Programs implemented are evidence-based practices that incorporate strategies to counter the ever-increasing challenges of teen alcohol and drug abuse and the impact on their sexual risk-taking behavior.

Programs utilized through the CHOICES are:

- Towards No Drug Abuse (Funded by State grant)*
- Botvin's LifeSkills (Funded by State grant)*
- Coping and Support Training (Funded by Local grant)*
- Reconnecting Youth (Funded by Local Grant)*

In addition, the CHOICES Program recently received a Drug-Free Community Federal Grant to assist in the efforts of the Tulare County Prevention Coalition. The Tulare County Prevention Coalition was organized in 2006 to drive environmental and systematic changes in Tulare County communities to reduce youth use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs, and over time, reduce the use of these substances by adults

R2. School Districts increase outreach for educating parents on more direct participation on the teen pregnancy issue.

Response: As new initiatives and laws occur regarding health poligies, etc., TCOE School Health Program Manager has and will continue to present the information to the Superintendent's Advisory Council. Promoting school connectedness and a positive school climate may encourage parents to increase their participation in regards to teen pregnancy prevention and awareness. All materials used in HIV/AIDS and comprehensive sexual health education are available for parent review prior to instruction. Positive Prevention and Positive Prevention Plus curriculum includes a "Family-Home Assignment "in each lesson to promote communication regarding sexual health.

The TCOE CHOICES Program regularly hosts (6-yearly) Town Hall meetings throughout Tulare County, in which community members and local stakeholders convene to hear information about new policies and/or trends influencing youth alcohol consumption, illegal drug and/or prescription drug abuse as well as bullying. Local experts in the field present the current research and trending information to educate parents and local community members.

In addition, Parent Engagement meetings also take place throughout Tulare County in partnership with the local community-based organizations where information is disseminated to increase parental awareness and they focus on skill building around positive family interaction.

We will make note of all the recommendations suggested and will be sure we share these recommended improvements. Once again, we extend our gratitude to the Tulare County Grand Jury for their diligent efforts in compiling these findings and recommendations.



TULARE COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Cheryl L. Duerksen, Ph.D. • Agency Director

June 24, 2015

The Honorable Bret Hillman
County Civic Center, Room 303
221 S. Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93291

Re: 2014/2015 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Hillman:

Enclosed is the Health and Human Services response to the 2014/2015 Grand Jury Final Report, as required within the sixty-day timeframe per Section 933 (e) of the California Penal Code.

Should there be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 624-8011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Cheryl L. Duerksen", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Cheryl L. Duerksen, Ph.D.
Agency Director

Enclosure

cc: Chuck White, Foreman, Tulare County Grand Jury
J. Steven Worthley, Chairman, Board of Supervisors, District Four
Allen Ishida, Board of Supervisors, District One
Pete Vander Poel, Board of Supervisors, District Two
Phillip A. Cox, Board of Supervisors, District Three
Mike Ennis, Board of Supervisors, District Five
Jean Rousseau, County Administrative Officer

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency
Response to the 2014 – 2015
Grand Jury Final Report

Teen Pregnancy Education and Awareness

Findings:

Finding 1

The majority of teen pregnancies in Tulare County are occurring with mother's 18-19 years of age. While still included in teen demographics, this age group is also considered adults.

Response: Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding. Approximately 70% of teen births were to adolescents 18-19 years of age.

Finding 2

While having a significantly higher rate than the state average, teen pregnancy rates have been steadily dropping in Tulare County.

Response: Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding. The teen birth rate in Tulare County has decreased by approximately 27% since 2010.

Finding 3

The HHSA has numerous programs in place for pregnant teens and teen mothers. The majority of these programs assist teens after they are pregnant. Less focus was apparent in teen pregnancy prevention.

Response: Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding. Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) administers programs on behalf of the State of California. The State determines which types of programs are funded, the target population, and the level of funding.

Finding 4

Although it may be difficult to prove a direct link, it is widely recognized that economic inequality, social marginalization and other structural factors affect teens' sexual behavior patterns. How these behaviors are linked with teens' race or ethnicity, educational achievements or family income is difficult to prove.

Response: Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding.

Finding 5

There was a wide disparity in race and ethnicity, with rates among both African American and Hispanic teens remaining twice as high as among other ethnic groups.

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Response: Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding. While the birth rate for African American teens is higher than for white and Asian teens, the total number of teen births is quite small (fewer than 20). The African American teen population in our county is small, which can create a disproportionately high rate; however, the rate does seem to be decreasing. In 2013, the teen birth rate for African Americans was 26 births per 1,000 and 21.4 for white teens. Statewide, Hispanic teens have the highest teen birth rate; this is true in Tulare County as well.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Increased coordination between public agencies within Tulare County involved with the teen pregnancy issue.

Response: Tulare County HHSA is a member of the Tulare Teen Health Alliance which focuses on teen pregnancy prevention strategies and collaboration. The Alliance consists of representatives from Visalia Unified School District, Family Health Care Network, Porterville Unified School District, Family Services, ACT Female Leadership Academy, Visalia Health Clinic, Proteus, Young Lives, Cal-Learn, CA Prep, and Nuevo Comienzo.

HHSA continually looks for grants and opportunities to coordinate services, provide outreach, and share information with other public agencies within the County to address teen pregnancy and the issues that result.

Recommendation 2

School Districts increase outreach for educating parents on more direct participation on the teen pregnancy issue.

Response: This will be addressed by Tulare County Office of Education.