

## **New CDC Report: Half of Teens Giving Birth Not Using Birth Control**

In a report released earlier this month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 50.1% of teenagers aged 15-19 with unintended pregnancies resulting in live births were not using any method of birth control at the time. Of these teens, 31.4% thought they could not get pregnant, 23.6% did not use contraception because their partner did not want it, and 22.1% said they did not mind getting pregnant.

With approximately 400,000 teens giving birth every year in the United States, the teen birth rate remains the highest in the developing world. Many of the report's recommendations – provide teens with accurate health information about pregnancy and contraception, ensure access to effective birth control methods, and increase teens' motivation and skills for pregnancy prevention – parallel the core work of HQ as we continue to provide an effective response to the elevated teen birth rates in our North Shore and Merrimack Valley service areas.

The CDC analyzed data collected in 19 states during 2004-2008 by the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). The report describes estimated rates of self-reported pre-pregnancy contraceptive use among 4,836 white, black, and Hispanic teen females aged 15-19 years. Some findings of note:

- Of the teens who became pregnant while using contraceptives
  - 24.2% used the moderately effective method of condoms
  - 21% used highly effective birth control, such as the Pill or IUD (less than 1%)
  - 5% used least effective methods, such as rhythm or withdrawal
  
- While there wasn't a significant difference among age, race and ethnicity, of the teens who thought they couldn't get pregnant
  - 42% were Hispanic
  - 32% were black
  - 27% were white

According to the report, "These findings have several implications. First, rates of contraceptive use among sexually active teens might be improved by providing appropriate access to contraception, encouraging consistent use of more effective contraceptives, promoting condom use for protection against sexually transmitted infections including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and increasing teens' motivation to use contraception consistently. Second, health-care providers, parents, and educators could encourage delaying the onset of sexual activity and abstinence, provide factual information about the conditions under which pregnancy can occur, increase teens' motivation to avoid pregnancy, and strengthen their negotiation skills for pregnancy prevention. Increasing teens' knowledge, skills, and motivation for effective contraceptive use could be an important strategy to prevent unintended teen pregnancy and childbearing."

The report was published in the January 20, 2012 issue of the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Read more here

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6102a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6102a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6102a1.htm?s_cid=mm6102a1_w)