



Idaho News

Idaho taxpayers pay millions for teen pregnancy

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Boise-- When it comes to tax dollars, many often wonder, where does the money go?

Turns out, a big chunk goes to pay for teen pregnancies. This as a new report says Idaho taxpayers are paying 39 million dollars every year because of teen childbearing.

For the first time in 10 years--a study breaks down what teen pregnancy costs.

"Teen child bearing is an expensive proposition," says Dave Fotsch, Central District Health Spokesman

Between 1991 and 2004--there were more than 31-thousand teen births in Idaho. At a cost of 700 million dollars.

This as the teen birth rate in Idaho declined 28 percent during that time. However--it still is not cheap.

"Teen childbearing cost taxpayers about 39 million dollars here in the state of Idaho," says Fotsch

That is every year. Why the high price?

"The cost associated with health care the cost associated with the children being on welfare," says Fotsch

Also factored into the figure is the negative consequences for the children of teen mothers, for example, those children are more likely to be incarcerated.

Central District Health in Boise is looking to expand programs that help prevent teen pregnancy. The district wants to expand the peak program, which encourages abstinence. It's currently used in schools in northern Idaho, and there are hopes of expanding it to more schools in the southwest part of the state.

"The peak program is aimed at adolescence right around the puberty time, around 11, 12 years old," says Lorraine Fortunati.

One program is already in the Treasure Valley, called "Youth in the Know".

"Where teens can learn about themselves learn about each other learn about relationships," says

Fortunati.

Central District Health says the expansion of existing program can further help bring down the rate, and cost of teen pregnancy.

The drop in teen pregnancy has saved money in Idaho. 26 million dollars were saved in 2004 alone.