

By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in South Carolina November 2006

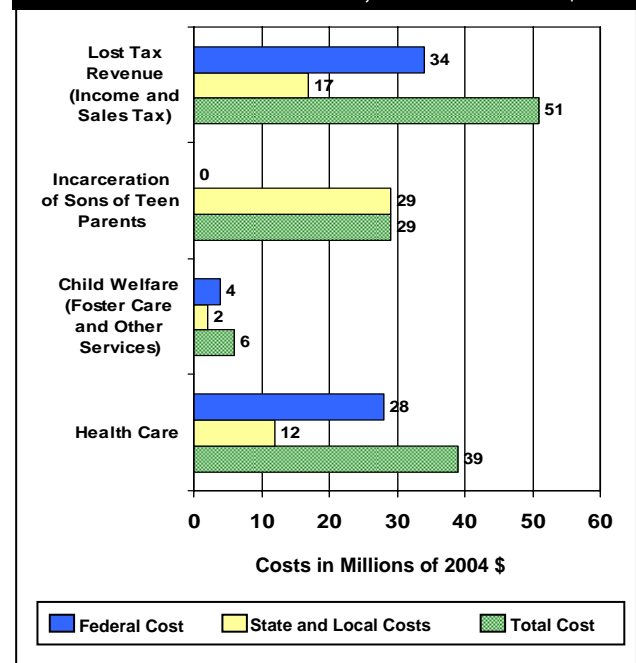
Highlights

- A new analysis from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy shows that teen childbearing (teens 19 and younger) in South Carolina cost taxpayers (federal, state, and local) at least \$156 million in 2004.
- Of the total 2004 teen childbearing costs in South Carolina, 51% were federal costs and 49% were state and local costs.
- Most of the costs of teen childbearing are associated with negative consequences for the *children* of teen mothers. In South Carolina, in 2004, annual taxpayer costs associated with children born to teen mothers included: \$39 million for public health care (Medicaid and SCHIP); \$6 million for child welfare; \$29 million for incarceration; and \$51 million in lost tax revenue, due to decreased earnings and spending.*
- The costs of childbearing are greatest for younger teens. In South Carolina, the average annual cost associated with a child born to a mother 17 and younger is \$3,330.
- Between 1991 and 2004 there have been more than 119,000 teen births in South Carolina, costing taxpayers a total of \$2.7 billion over that period.
- The teen birth rate in South Carolina declined 28 percent between 1991 and 2004. The

progress South Carolina has made in reducing teen childbearing saved taxpayers an estimated \$92 million in 2004 alone.

- Nationally teen childbearing costs taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion a year.
- For more information, including a national report and state-by-state comparisons, please visit www.teenpregnancy.org/costs.

Figure 1: Selected Annual Costs in South Carolina for Children of Teen Parents, In Millions of 2004 \$



* Careful readers will note that the cost breakdown for the *children* of teen mothers does not match the total costs. This is because the total costs include costs associated with both teen *parents* and their *children*. Also note that because we cannot measure and include all outcomes and all costs, the analysis should be considered conservative; that is, it is likely that the full costs of a teen birth are greater than the figures presented here. Due to rounding, federal and state and local costs may not add to the totals presented in Figure 1 and throughout.