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Contact: Danielle Lewis
513-636-9473

**Annual Teen Births in Cincinnati Remain Low,
According to Annual Survey**
National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is May 7

CINCINNATI -- Births to young teenage girls in Cincinnati totaled 192 in 2007, the second lowest annual number of teen births recorded since 1988, according to the annual survey of the Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI) program. There were 191 births to young teenage girls in Cincinnati in 2004 and 207 in 2006.

PSI, a United Way agency partner, sponsored also by the City of Cincinnati, is a peer education program of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center aimed at reducing teen parenthood and the spread of sexually transmitted infections. PSI has been tabulating teen birth data since 1988.

The results of the annual PSI survey are being announced in conjunction with National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day, May 7. Teens are encouraged to visit www.StayTeen.org on this day to take a quiz that asks young people what they would do in a number of sexual situations. "The simple and direct message of the Quiz is: sex is serious, have a plan," said Sarah Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The message of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day is "sex has consequences." Adults are encouraged to consult the national campaign's 10 tips for helping children avoid teen pregnancy at www.TheNationalCampaign.org.

The PSI evaluation looks at births in seven hospitals in 2007 to girls 12 to 16 years old living within Cincinnati Public School district zip codes. The hospitals are University, Good Samaritan, Bethesda North, Christ and Mercy Franciscan Hospital at Mt. Airy, Fairfield and Anderson. Births to young teens declined 7 percent in the last year between 2006 and 2007, from 207 to 192, and 51 percent between 1993 and 2007, from 391 to 192. Nationally, the birth rate for teens between the ages of 15 and 19 fell 35 percent between 1991 and 2005. A direct comparison between local and national births is not available, in part because national statistics look at birth rates while PSI looks at number of births.

"Young teen births resumed the recent trend of declining in the Cincinnati area," says Christopher Kraus, JD, PSI coordinator. Social factors contributing to this trend are the advent of new contraceptive technologies like depo-provera, reduced sexual activity rates among teens, and increased use of condoms, according to Kraus.

Fewer than half of all high school students in the United States have had sex, but 63% of high school seniors have had sex, according to the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of the U.S. Center for Disease Control. Despite a 36% decline in the national rate of teen pregnancy since the early

1990s, 31% of teen girls become pregnant at least once before age 20 and the vast majority (82%) of teen pregnancies are unintended. The teen birth rate also increased slightly between 2005 and 2006 after 15 years of steady decline – clearly a renewed focus on preventing teen pregnancy is needed.

"For 18 years, the Cincinnati PSI teen leadership program has been part of a national response to unwanted pregnancies. Our program motto is 'To see a change...be the change! PSI...get involved!'" says Kraus. Cincinnati PSI welcomes agents of change in all forms.

Two physicians at Cincinnati Children's brought PSI to Cincinnati, and the program began in the Cincinnati Public Schools in September of 1990, with full implementation for 4,000 Cincinnati Public School seventh graders annually in 1992. This year, 12 Cincinnati public and charter schools with 12 to 14 year olds hosted the PSI program for 1,100 young teens.

PSI involves role playing, in which older teens, known as teen leaders, provide the instruction. These teen leaders send the message that teens can postpone sex and still be normal teens. In the classroom, middle-school-age students play out classic situations for boys and girls dealing with peer pressure and media pressure.

Forty-eight teen leaders directed instruction this year. Over 120 applied for the position. More than 1,100 teen leaders have instructed 53,000 young teens in Cincinnati since 1990. "The teen leaders are the single most influential factor in this program's success," says Kraus. "They inspire their peers to postpone sexual activity."

Cincinnati teen leader, Taylor McCleod, a junior at Withrow University High School, serves on the national teen advisory board of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, one of the founding partners of the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. PSI will celebrate the year of teen leader accomplishment at the 18th annual teen leader banquet, May 8, at Cincinnati Children's.

For more information about PSI, go to www.cincinnatichildrens.org/psi, or call 363-7795.

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Cincinnati Children's, one of the top five children's hospitals in the nation according to Child magazine, is a 475-bed institution devoted to bringing the world the joy of healthier kids. Cincinnati Children's is dedicated to providing care that is timely, efficient, effective, family-centered, equitable and safe. For its efforts to transform the way health care is provided, Cincinnati Children's received the 2006 American Hospital Association-McKesson Quest for Quality Prize®. Cincinnati Children's ranks second nationally among all pediatric centers in research grants from the National Institutes of Health and is a teaching affiliate of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. The Cincinnati Children's vision is to be the leader in improving child health.