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Teen Birth Rate Up For Second Year in a Row New Survey Suggests Parents Most Influence Teens' Decisions About Sex

(Washington, DC) — The teen birth rate in the United States increased 1% in 2007, according to data released today by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). This is the second year in a row that the teen birth rate has increased. The increase follows 14 years of continuous decline in the teen birth rate. That is, after declining 34% between 1991 and 2005, the teen birth rate has now increased 5% between 2005 and 2007.

“The teen birth rate in the United States declined dramatically in past years because of both less sex and more contraception,” said Sarah Brown, CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. “The teen birth rate is probably now going up for the opposite set of reasons – some combination of more sex and less contraception.”

A separate public opinion survey released today by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy provides some guidance on what might help to reverse the recent teen birth rate trend. Results from the nationally-representative survey make clear that (1) when it comes to teens' decisions about sex, parents are more influential than they think, and (2) adults and teens view efforts that encourage teens to delay sex and that encourage sexually active teens to use contraception as complimentary *not* contradictory strategies. In particular:

- Teens say parents (31%) most influence their decisions about sex—more than friends (18%), the media (7%), teachers and sex educators (3%) and others.
- For their part, 43% of adults believe that friends most influence teens' decisions about sex; only 24% of adults believe that parents are most influential.
- Fully 73% of adults and a plurality of teens wish that teens were getting more information about both abstinence and contraception, rather than either/or.

NCHS data on changes in the teen birth rate between 2006 and 2007 indicate:

- The birth rate increased 1% for those aged 15-17 and 1% for those aged 18-19. The birth rate for those aged 10-14 remained unchanged.
- The birth rate among Hispanic teens *declined* 2% and increased 2% for non-Hispanic whites, 1% for non-Hispanic blacks, and 2% for Asian/Pacific Islander teens.
- The teen birth rate among Native American teens increased a dramatic 7%.

“The only good news is that the increase in the teen birth rate in 2007 was less than the increase in 2006,” said Sarah Brown. “Let's hope that 2 years of an increasing teen birth rate reminds policymakers, parents, and others that our efforts to help young people delay pregnancy and parenthood must be more intense and more creative, and must rely on the very best research available on what works.”

Please visit www.TheNationalCampaign.org for more information on the teen birth rate increase, the full results of the public opinion survey, and other relevant materials and resources.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy, especially among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors.