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Large Racial Disparity in Teen Birth Rates

Minority teens are three-five times more likely than white teens to give birth

Madison (October 3, 2005) –Minority kids are having kids at a much more rapid pace than white teens in Wisconsin. The study by UW Madison and Wisconsin’s Department of Health and Family Services researchers focused on females age 15-19 from 1998-2002. It’s published in the latest issue of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (vol. 104, No.7).

“African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians are at considerably higher risk for having a baby in adolescence compared with whites,” the report finds. This is a health concern because children born to teenage parents are at “higher risk for low birth weight, cognitive and behavioral problems and substance abuse.”

The average annual birth rate for white teens in Wisconsin during the five year study period was 23.1 per 1,000 females age 15-19. That compares to 114.3 for African Americans, 97.5 for Hispanics and 81.8 for American Indians.

“A specific goal for reduction of teen births to minority adolescents in Wisconsin may be instrumental in implementing programs to bring about change,” the authors recommend. *Healthiest Wisconsin 2010* has general goals to decrease adolescent sexual activity and lower unintended pregnancy.

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