

Adolescent Health in the San Joaquin Valley:

Individual and Neighborhood Characteristics in Kings County

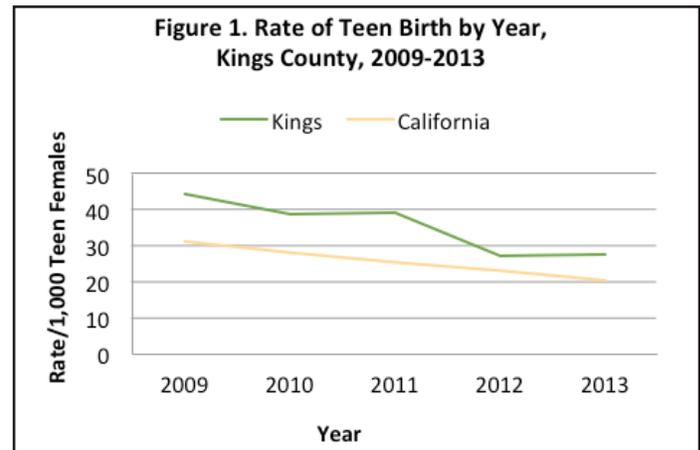
Background and Implications

Promoting healthy pregnancies and births while reducing teen pregnancies are key objectives for public health. Research indicates that early investment in initiatives that tackle these issues improve the health and well-being of the overall community. This report examines current trends in teen birth, how teen birth is related to individual and neighborhood characteristics in Kings County, and the cost associated with related health outcomes.

Summary of Findings

The health of adolescents is affected by social factors at the personal, family, and community levels. Social determinants such as socioeconomic status and employment opportunity are negatively associated with teen births. Communities with the greatest employment opportunity have the lowest rates of teen pregnancy in the region. Community structure is crucial for the health trajectory of young people and the population as a whole, in regards to health and cost benefits. Adolescents are highly susceptible to negative community influences that accompany low socioeconomic status, such as low employment opportunity and poverty.

Figure 1 illustrates that Kings County has a higher teen birth rate than the state. However, the county has reduced teen births at a rate similar to the state. A 39%



decline in teen births (females ages 15 - 19) from 2009 to 2013 was found in Kings County. In 2009, the rate was 44/1,000 compared to a rate of 27/1,000 in 2013. The county saw a total of 1,346 teenage births between 2009 and 2013. Latinas account for 70% of teen births, but only compose 50% of the general population.

The prevention of teen pregnancy provides a cost benefit for youth and the community as a whole. Table 1 shows conservative estimates of costs to taxpayers due to teen birth. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy estimates that the average cost of a teen birth is \$1,462. By reducing the rate of teen births, Kings County has saved 30% of the estimated costs in 2013 compared to 2009.

Table 1. Total Costs to Taxpayers Associated with Teen Childbearing by Year, Kings County

Year	Rate ^a of Teen Births	Total Costs of Teen Childbearing ^b	% Decline in Teen Birth Rate Compared to Previous Year	Cumulative Savings Due to Decline Teen Birth Rate
2009	44	\$498,542	-	-
2010	38	\$435,676	13.6	\$62,866
2011	39	\$440,062	-2.6	\$58,480
2012	27	\$304,096	30.7	\$194,446
2013	27	\$308,482	0	\$194,446

^a rate per 1,000 live births

^b based on average cost of teen birth in California \$1,462 (2010)

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Current Programs and Services in Kings County

The Targeted Case Management (TCM) program offers case management services to residents who fall into any of the following categories: Individuals with a communicable disease, children under the age of 21, individuals at risk of institutionalization, individuals in jeopardy of negative health or psycho-social outcomes, medically fragile individuals. Public Health Nurses provide case management to these clients including connecting them to services ranging from transportation assistance to insurance coverage to referrals as appropriate.

Childhood Immunizations: KCDPH has worked to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with a number of private insurance companies to provide critical preventive immunizations to not only Medi-Cal patients and the uninsured through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, but to many insured children in Kings County as well.

Services for Men and Women: KCDPH provides Family Planning Access, Care, and Treatment (FPACT) services. Family PACT benefits include sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, and HIV screening services to eligible low-income men and women to decide for themselves the number, timing, and spacing of their children. Available to all residents by both appointment and walk-in basis, in Hanford, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics with confidential services, HIV/TB/Cocci case management, and immunizations. STD testing and immunizations are also available in Avenal and Corcoran. KCDPH has worked with a number of private insurance companies to provide preventive immunizations as well as STD testing and treatment. This enables KCDPH to offer these services to Medi-Cal patients, the uninsured, as well as to insured residents of Kings County.

Leading Partners in County Coalitions: KCDPH actively supports and participates in the Asthma, Breastfeeding, Diabetes, and Tobacco Coalitions, as well as the Kings Partnership for Prevention (KPPF), which brings together more than 20 community partners to affect various community concerns including childhood obesity, diabetes, asthma, tobacco, and substance abuse.

Leveraging Current Programs to Educate Families on Well-being: KCDPH partners with institutions on a wide range of areas including childhood/pediatric illness while serving the needs of the resident. KCDPH utilizes every health services program with clients to provide outreach and education and/or prevent childhood illness including Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP), California Children's Services (CCS), Field Nursing through Referrals, Women, Infant, & Children (WIC) Program, Intervention and Prevention (I&P) clinics, and First 5.

Proposed Strategies to Promote and Protect the Well-being of Kings County

Strategic Planning: KCDPH is in the third year of a strategic plan utilizing the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to prepare for Public Health Accreditation. This process includes working with the KPPF on a community needs assessment and ultimately a community health improvement plan.

Partnerships: Continued partnership with KPPF will allow KCDPH to continue to form key partnerships like relocating First 5 Kings County into the health department and co-locating WIC services with First 5 to group services for populations, especially where access may be limited.

KCDPH is constantly striving to continue offering health services by expanding outreach, participating in health fairs, working on community health assessments, working on the community health improvement plan, and seeking out funding opportunities. Our mission is to promote and protect the health and well-being of our community. Our vision is optimal health for all. All current and future activities aspire to our mission and vision.