



ISSUE BRIEF • JULY 2013

# Teen Pregnancy

## WESTERLY



Some measures of adolescent health and teen pregnancy are stronger in Westerly than in other Rhode Island communities. Opportunities exist to further prevent teen pregnancy, improve family and community well-being, and help all Westerly teens achieve their education, career, and personal goals.

### Why we care about teen pregnancy

Teen pregnancy affects the long-term well-being of families and communities. Teen pregnancy is associated with serious health risks for the mother and child. For example, Rhode Island women younger than 20 years old are more likely to use tobacco during pregnancy and have late prenatal care and are less likely to breastfeed.<sup>1</sup> Teen pregnancy and parenting also contribute to higher high school drop-out rates and lower income and educational attainment.<sup>2</sup> For fathers, education statistics are similar; between 2002 and 2006, 40% of infants born to teens had fathers with a high-school diploma or less. Children of teen parents are more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems, be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teen, and face unemployment as a young adult.<sup>3</sup> In Rhode Island in 2008, public sector costs associated with teen childbearing were estimated at nearly \$49 million.<sup>2</sup>

### Community strengths

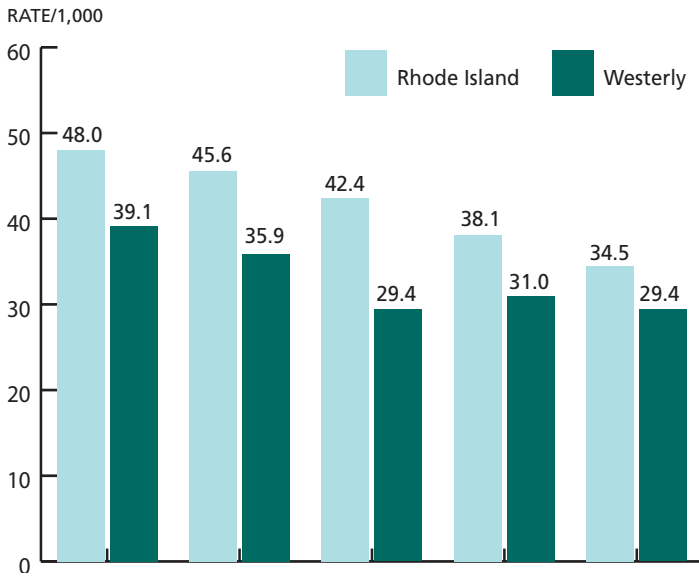
- **The number and rate of teen pregnancies have been decreasing**—although at a slower rate in Westerly (25%) than across Rhode Island (28%) during 2007-2011. (See Figure 1 on the next page.)
- **The Westerly teen pregnancy rate (30 per 1,000 teens) was below the state rate (38) during 2009-2011.** (See Figure 2 on the next page.)
- **The repeat teen birth rate was lower in Westerly than statewide.** Among the 40 infants born to teens in Westerly during 2009-2011, 4 (10%) were born to teens who were already mothers, compared to 16% statewide.
- **Most Westerly teens want to continue their education.** Nine out of ten Westerly 12th graders had planned to attend college during the 2010-2011 school year, the same as their peers statewide (90%).

#### WESTERLY COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

- ALL AGES: **22,787**
- WHITE: **27,171 (92.9%)**
- BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN: **222 (1.0%)**
- HISPANIC/LATINO ETHNICITY: **651 (2.9%)**
- BELOW POVERTY: **7.7%**
- FEMALES AGED 15-19: **613**
- TEEN PREGNANCIES BY YEAR:

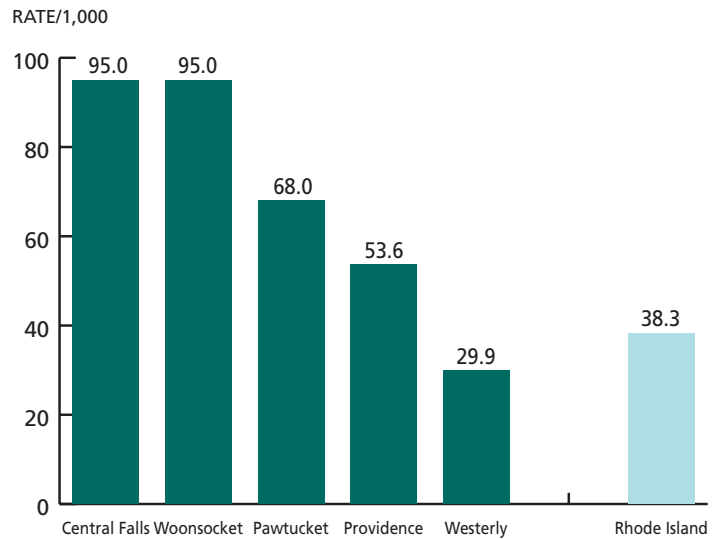


**FIGURE 1**  
TEEN PREGNANCY RATES, WESTERLY AND RHODE ISLAND,  
2007-2011\*



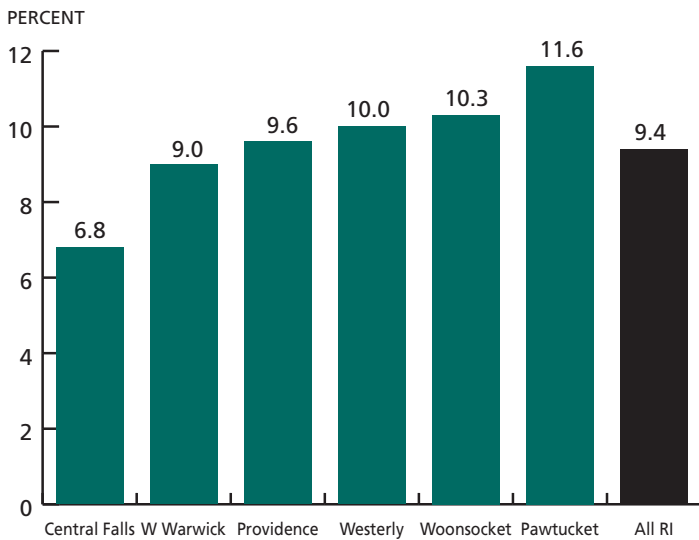
\*Teen pregnancy rates are defined as the number of births, induced terminations, and spontaneous fetal deaths (e.g., miscarriages) per 1,000 female teens aged 15-19; 2011 data are provisional; rates based on 2010 US Census data  
Source: Maternal and Child Health Database, Rhode Island Department of Health

**FIGURE 2**  
TEEN PREGNANCY RATES BY SELECTED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS,  
RHODE ISLAND, 2009-2011



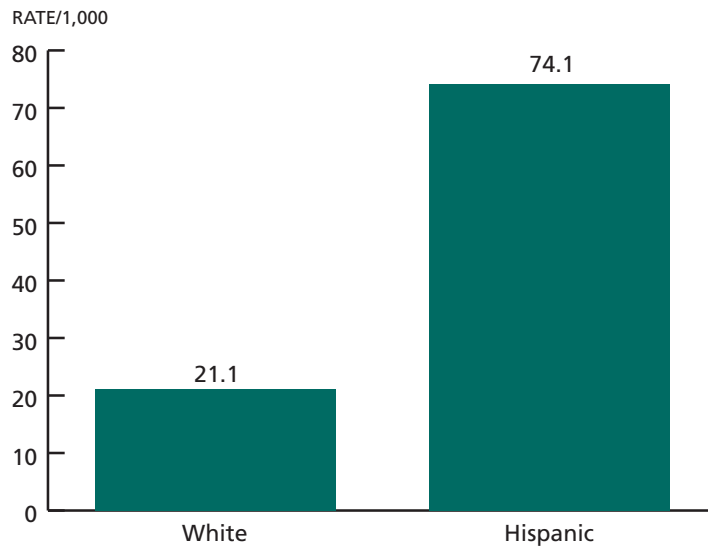
Source: Maternal and Child Health Database, Rhode Island Department of Health

**FIGURE 3**  
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT AMONG TEEN BIRTHS BY SELECTED  
CITIES/TOWNS, RHODE ISLAND  
2009-2011\*



\*Low birth weight = <2500 grams; teens aged 15-19  
Source: Maternal and Child Health Database, Rhode Island Department of Health

**FIGURE 4**  
TEEN BIRTH RATES BY SELECTED RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS,  
WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND\*  
2009-2011



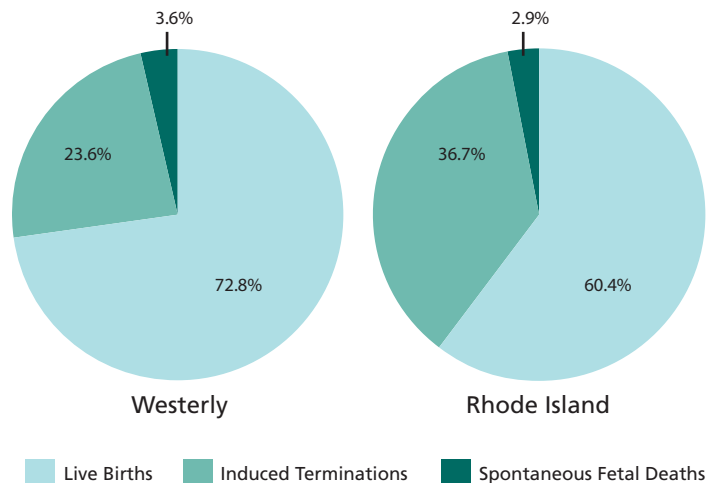
\*Rates were calculated using population estimates based on the 2010 US Census; rates for Black/African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans are not shown due to small numbers  
Source: Maternal and Child Health Database, Rhode Island Department of Health

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Rhode Island Department of Health. (2012). 2012 Rhode Island Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System data book. Retrieved from [www.health.ri.gov/publications/databooks/2012PregnancyRiskAssessmentMonitoringSystem.pdf](http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/databooks/2012PregnancyRiskAssessmentMonitoringSystem.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup>Counting It Up: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Rhode Island in 2008. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, June 2011.
- <sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012) About teen pregnancy. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy/AboutTeenPreg.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy/AboutTeenPreg.htm)

- **Westerly high school students had lower absenteeism rates** during the 2010-2011 school year than their peers statewide. Less than one-fifth (19%) of the 990 high school students in Westerly were absent 18 or more days compared to the statewide rate of 25%. The overall attendance rate of 92% was the same as the state rate.
- **Westerly students had higher school achievement** than their statewide peers. The Westerly class of 2011 had a higher four-year graduation rate (88%) than that in Rhode Island overall (77%). In addition, 91% of Westerly 11th grade students were proficient at reading compared to 77% of all Rhode Island students.

**FIGURE 5**  
TEEN PREGNANCY OUTCOMES, WESTERLY AND RHODE ISLAND, 2009-2011



Source: Maternal and Child Health Database, Rhode Island Department of Health

## Community challenges

- **One in 10 (10%)** of the Westerly teens who gave birth during 2009-2011 received late\* or no prenatal care. This figure is more than the overall rate among Westerly residents (8%). Statewide, the rate of late prenatal care was nearly twice as high among teens (23%) as among those aged 20 and older (12%).
- **Westerly teens had a higher rate of low birth weight births** (10%) than teens statewide and in some other Rhode Island cities with high teen birth rates (Figure 3).
- **Disparities exist among racial/ethnic groups.** During 2009-2011 in Westerly, the teen birth rate was 3.5 times higher among those of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity as among Whites (Figure 4).

## Worth noting

A higher proportion of teen pregnancies result in a live birth in Westerly than statewide. Among the 55 Westerly teen pregnancies during 2009-2011, 40 (73%) resulted in a live birth, and 13 (24%) in an induced termination. Statewide, 60% of teen pregnancies resulted in a live birth and 37% in an induced termination (Figure 5).

## What you can do

- **Make a data-driven action plan** to address teen pregnancy and promote adolescent health in Westerly. Take advantage of your community's many strengths and support services to do so.
- **Encourage referrals to community-based programs and services** that can help teens prevent pregnancy and support them if they do get pregnant. Providers should coordinate care for teens and follow up on referrals, as appropriate, to assure access to care.
- **Keep talking with us.** We hope to engage in continuous conversation and collaboration to help you enhance adolescent health in your community. For more information, contact Kim Harris, Adolescent Health Program Manager, at 401-222-4354.
- Visit [www.health.ri.gov/for/pregnantwomen](http://www.health.ri.gov/for/pregnantwomen) for useful information for pregnant women.

\*Prenatal care that begins after the first trimester

## Department of Health Resources in Westerly

### **Personal Responsibility Education Program (Teen Outreach Program Curriculum)**

Combines a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum with a youth development approach in the form of a community service component that has proven effective in both school and community-based settings.

**South County Community Action Program** 1935 Kingstown Road, Wakefield • 401-789-3016, x305

### **Title X Family Planning**

Provides confidential family planning services at low or no cost based on income. Teens can receive confidential birth control visits or HIV/STD testing without parental notification or consent.

**Thundermist Health Center of South County** 1 River Street, Wakefield • 401-783-0523

• [www.health.ri.gov/programs/familyplanning](http://www.health.ri.gov/programs/familyplanning)

### **Maternal and Child Home Visiting**

Provides short-term home visiting services to pregnant or parenting teens, including fathers. Home visitors help their clients find appropriate prenatal care, engage in preventive health practices, connect with community resources, become more confident parents, and set and achieve personal goals.

**First Connections at VNS Home Health Services** 14 Woodruff Avenue #7, Narragansett • 401-782-0500

### **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program**

Provides services such as healthy food checks, nutrition counseling, and breastfeeding support to low-income pregnant and parenting teens.

**Wood River Health Services** 93 Tower Street, Westerly • 401-387-9611 • [www.health.ri.gov/wic](http://www.health.ri.gov/wic)

## Additional resources in your community

### **South Shore Mental Health**

Provides behavioral health services for individuals and families recovering from mental, brain, emotional, and addictive disorders.

4705 Old Post Road, Charlestown • 401-364-7705

55 Cherry Lane, Wakefield • 401-789-1367

### **Thundermist Health Center of South County**

The Thundermist Community Dental Program offers on-site services in oral examinations, preventive, hygienic, and restorative services, and classroom-based oral health education. Through the ThunderKids Wellness Program, targets clinically obese adolescent children 11-13 years old through an intensive, therapeutic, multi-specialty intervention that runs throughout the entire school year.

1 River Street, Wakefield • 401-783-0523

### **TIDES Family Services**

Provides high-risk youth with comprehensive and preventive services that foster personal growth and stability to better connect them with their families and in their communities.

1935 Kingstown Road, Wakefield • 401-284-0064

### **YMCA**

Provides after-school programs, fitness programs, and teen nights. The YMCA also has the Leaders' Club, which provides leadership training, personal growth, service to others, and social development by working closely with peers, counselors, and the community.

95 High Street, Westerly • 401-596-2894