



Center for Public Policy Priorities

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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW REPORT: STATEWIDE, SOME AREAS OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH IMPROVING

Austin, TX— According to the newly released *State of Texas Children 2007*, statewide, more women are receiving prenatal care and teen births are continuing to decline, while babies born at low birthweight and infant mortality rates are worsening. The report, released by the Austin-based Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP), provides the latest look at the well-being of children in Texas and for every county in the state.

“The report finds that when it comes to maternal and child health, Texas has much to be thankful for,” said Frances Deviney, Texas KIDS COUNT Director. “At the same time, work remains in other areas. Statewide, low birthweight and infant mortality rates have increased, child poverty is up for the fifth straight year, unemployment has increased, and Texas continues to have the highest rates of uninsured children in the nation.”

State Findings:

- In Texas, the proportion of women receiving little or no prenatal care has decreased by 5.0% since 2002. As of 2004, 91,329 babies (or 23.9%) were born to women who received little or no prenatal care.
- In Texas, babies born to teens decreased by 10.3% since 2000. As of 2004, 52,363 babies were born to Texan teens. However, Texas still has the highest teen birth rate in the country.
- In 2004, 30,647 babies (or 8% of all live births) were born weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This is an increase in the low birthweight rate of 8% since 2000.
- The rate of infants who die before their first birthday increased by 8.6% from 2000 to 2004. In 2004, 2,398 infants (6.3% of all live births that year) died before turning one year old.

These findings follow a recent Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey of new Texas mothers that finds that statewide, new mothers are engaging in healthier behaviors, but still struggling with postpartum depression:

- The rate of Texas women who drank alcohol during the last three months of their pregnancy dropped by 8.3% from 2002 to 2003.
- The rate of Texas mothers who breastfed or pumped breast milk to feed their baby after delivery increased by 2.3% from 2002 to 2003 (from 74.8 to 76.5%).
- The rate of Texas women who were slightly or moderately depressed in the months after delivery increased by 1.23% from 48.5% in 2002 to 49.1% in 2003.

Other Findings:

- As of 2004, 22.7 % of Texas children live in poverty (or 1,421,931 total children), an increase of 9.7% since 2000. Poverty for 2004 was \$15,219 for one parent and two children, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- The proportion of Texas' total population living in poverty has increased by 11.0% since 2000. As of 2004, 3,610,126 people (16.2%) of the population, lives in poverty.
- In Texas, the child death rate (ages 1-14) has dropped by 12.5% since 2000. There were 1,034 child deaths (or 21.5 per 100,000 children) in 2005.
- Violent deaths to teens ages 15-19 declined by 18.4 % since 2000, with 842 deaths (47.9%) in 2005.

Policy Solutions

- ***Increase outreach about Texas' new perinatal program.*** The program is expected to provide health coverage to 35,000 low-income women under the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- ***Develop a work support system that enables working families to meet their basic needs.*** Ensure that families remain eligible for public assistance until they earn enough to meet their basic needs. Poverty is one of the biggest predictors of infant mortality and other health and societal ills.
- ***Make higher education more accessible and affordable for Texans.*** Increase commitment to community colleges and ensure that higher education remains affordable.
- ***Expand job training and career development opportunities for working adults.*** Make work pay with policies that help low-wage workers move into jobs with living wages.

To learn how Texas as a whole fared across all indicators, including health care, education, and child abuse, visit www.cppp.org/factbook07.

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The Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) is a policy research organization committed to improving conditions for low- and moderate-income Texans. CPPP is also the Texas home to KIDS COUNT, a national and state-by-state effort to track the well-being of children.