

Teen childbearing in California costs taxpayers \$956 million annually

April 30 2014, by Bill Albert

Teen childbearing in California cost taxpayers at least \$956 million in 2010, according to an updated analysis from The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy; for the nation overall, teen childbearing cost taxpayers \$9.4 billion.

Most of the public sector costs of teen childbearing are associated with [negative consequences](#) often experienced by the children of [teen mothers](#), during both their childhood and their adolescent years. This includes costs associated with [public health care](#) (Medicaid and CHIP), increased participation in [child welfare](#), and, among those children who have reached adolescence and [young adulthood](#), increased rates of incarceration and lost tax revenue due to decreased earnings and spending.

Between 1991 and 2010 there have been 1,158,701 teen births in California, costing taxpayers a total of \$27.4 billion over that period. These public sector costs would have been higher had it not been for the substantial declines in teen childbearing. California has seen a 57% decline in the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2010. The impressive strides made have saved taxpayers an estimated \$1.8 billion in 2010 alone, compared to what they would have paid if rates had not fallen.

These new state data are an update of research conducted for The National Campaign in 2004 by Saul Hoffman, Ph.D., of the University of Delaware. The analysis provides a conservative estimate of public costs, based on the increased risk of consequences faced by teen

mothers, fathers, and their children as compared to mothers having children in their early twenties, controlling for many other factors.

"In addition to improving the wellbeing of children, youth, and families, reducing teen pregnancy also saves taxpayer dollars," said Sarah Brown, CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. "Even though teen pregnancy and childbearing are at historic lows, the still-high public costs associated with teen childbearing remind us all that complacency should not hinder further progress and that progress should not be confused with victory."

Provided by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

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