

## Births to Teen Moms Continue Declining

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The teenage birth rate fell to an all-time low in 2015, according to a study released Thursday by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The birth rate for females aged 15 to 19 was 22.3 per 1,000 births, down from 2014's 24.2 per 1,000, according to the center report.

That rate is the lowest since the federal government started keeping records early in the 20th century, said federal statistician Brady Hamilton.

“There’s a change in social norms,” said Bill Albert, spokesman for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, an non-profit, public education effort.

Albert said teen births nationally peaked in 1991 with about 62 per 1,000 births. He credited the downward trend to investment in education, availability of contraception, changes in teen attitudes and behavior, and youth-aimed media that has shown the difficulties of teen pregnancy.

Locally, teenage pregnancy has followed a largely downward trend for years, as well.

In Pennsylvania, the 2013 rate was 20.7 per 1,000 births for 15 to 19 year olds.

In New Jersey, the 2014 rate for 15 to 17 year olds was 5.9 per 1,000 births, and 25 per 1,000 for 18 and 19 year olds.

In Philadelphia, the birth rate for 15 to 19 year olds in 2013 was 39.1 per 1,000, a decline from 2003 to 2007 when it hovered at a little under 60 births per 1,000.