



Teen pregnancy rates reach ‘dramatic’ 40-year low in U.S.

WASHINGTON – Teen pregnancy rates in the U.S. have dropped to a 40-year low, according to a study released Wednesday.

The Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit sexual health research group that favors abortion rights, found the rate of pregnancies among 15- to 19-year-olds has declined 42 percent from its peak 22 years ago.

In 1990, the pregnancy rate was 117 per 1,000 female teens -- in 2008, that figure had dropped to 68 per 1,000.

The research also showed that the number of teenagers giving birth dropped 35 percent between 1991 and 2008, from 61.8 to 40.2 births per 1,000 teens.

The decline in teenage pregnancies resulted in fewer abortions, with 17.8 abortions per 1,000 teenage girls and women in 2008 -- a 59 percent drop from its 1988 peak of 43.5 abortions per 1,000 teens.

“The declines in teen pregnancy have been nothing short of extraordinary,” Sarah Brown, CEO of The

National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy said. “Make no mistake, the credit for this remarkable progress goes to teens themselves who have, over the past two decades, adopted a less sex, more contraception strategy -- one that is clearly working.”

The institute said that while teen pregnancy, birth and abortion rates had declined “dramatically” among all racial and ethnic groups since 1990, pregnancy rates among black and Hispanic teens remained two to three times as high as that of non-Hispanic white teens.

In addition, the abortion rate for black teens was found to be four times that of whites.

Kathryn Kost, lead author of the study said, “The continued inequities among racial and ethnic minorities are cause for concern. It is time to redouble our efforts to ensure that all teens have access to the information and contraceptive services they need to prevent unwanted pregnancies.”

