

The National Vital Statistics System

Going from Good to Great

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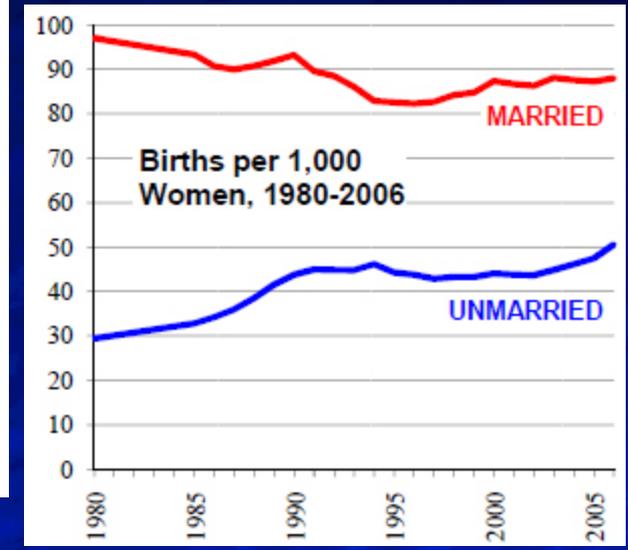
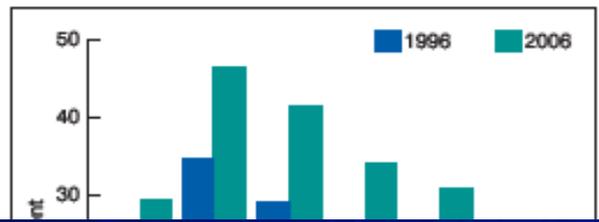
August 8, 2012

Births: Final Data for 2006

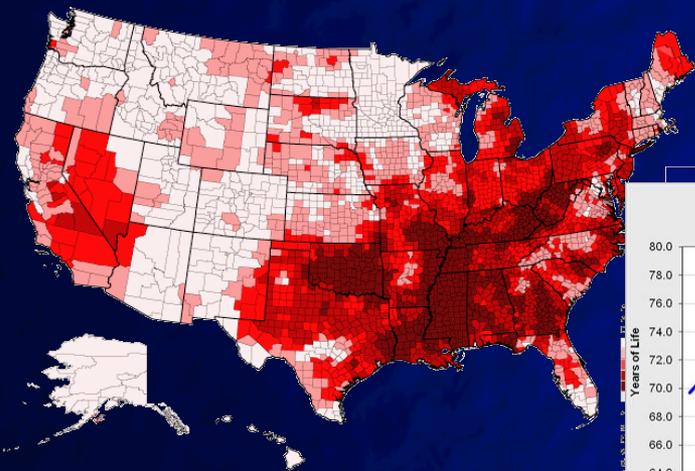
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Abstract

Objectives—This report presents 2006 data on U.S. births according to a wide variety of characteristics. Data are presented for maternal demographic characteristics including age, live-birth order, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, and educational attainment; maternal lifestyle and health characteristics (medical risk factors, weight gain, and tobacco use); medical care utilization by pregnant

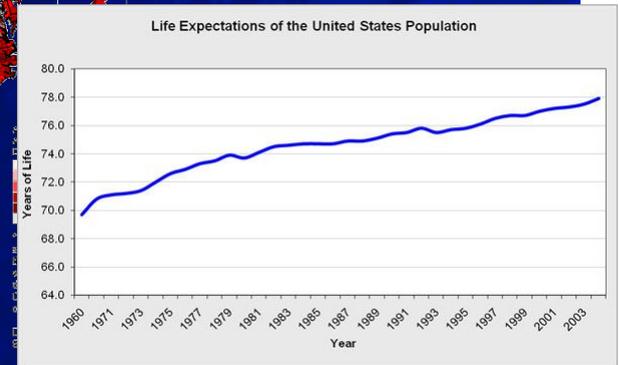
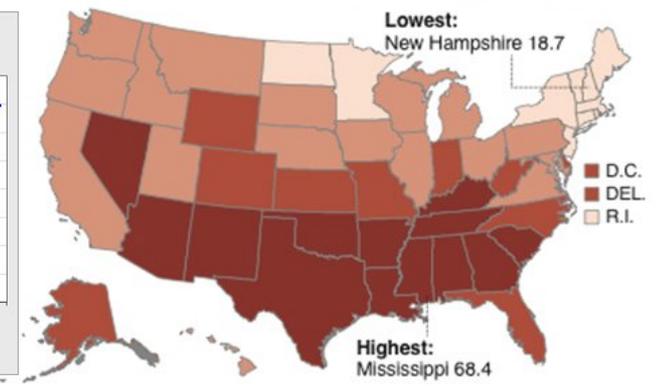


Heart Disease Death Rates, 1988-2003
Adults Ages 35 Years and Older by County



Teen birth rates highest in South

The U.S. average teen birth rate in 2006 for 15- to -19 year olds rose to 41.9 births per thousand females, up from 40.5 in 2005.
Rate per thousand, 2006



How are vital statistics prepared?

- **Recording of vital events is the responsibility of the jurisdiction in which the event occurs**
 - 50 states
 - 5 U.S. territories
 - NYC
 - DC
- **Data collected from new parents, hospitals, birthing centers, physicians, nursing homes, medical examiner offices, state anatomy boards**
- **Reported to local or state health departments**
- **Records reviewed, edited, processed, registered**
- **Causes of death coded according to international standards**
- **Data files prepared**

Vital Statistics Cooperative Program

- **57 jurisdictions (NAPHSIS)**
 - Collect and report data using U.S. Standard certificates
- **Federal government (NCHS)**
 - Compiles data
 - Issues data files
 - Prepares analytical reports

Roles of Vital Records

- Civil registration system

Civil registration system

- **Serve as the permanent legal record of the fact of birth, death, marriage or divorce**
 - **Birth certificate**
 - Proof of date of birth, age, parentage, birthplace, citizenship
 - Used for school entrance, voter registration, driver's license, marriage license, passport, social security benefits
 - **Death certificate**
 - Proof of date of death, date and place of interment, cause and circumstances of death
 - Used to obtain insurance benefits and pensions; transfer property, etc.

Roles of vital statistics

- Civil registration system
- Public health data system

Critical source of public health data

- (Just about) **Complete reporting**
 - Not a sample or survey
 - Mandatory reporting
- **Certificate revisions allow data items to remain relevant**
- (Until recently) **Consistent data among jurisdictions**

Public health uses of vital statistics data

- Identifying public health problems
- Identifying patterns in fertility and mortality
- Monitoring trends in health and health care
- Monitoring risk factors leading to poor outcomes
- Planning and evaluating public health programs

Roles of Vital Statistics

- Civil registration system
- Public health data system
- **National security system**

National security system

- **Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Act of 2004**
 - Sets minimum standards for birth certificates
 - Requires verification of authenticity of birth certificates by SSA and MVAs
 - Requires matching of birth and death records to set deceased flags
 - **To date**
 - No regulations
 - No funds appropriated

National security system

- **Evolving to meet new needs**
 - Electronic Verification of Vital Events (EVVE)
 - State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE)
- **Electronic birth and death systems**
 - Improve timeliness, efficiency and data quality

Roles of Vital Statistics

- Civil registration system
- Public health data system
- National security system
- Public health surveillance system

Challenges

Consequences of multiple roles

- **Competition for scarce resources**
 - What do states do first (or at all)?
 - Civil registration most critical at the state level—
other functions may suffer



Challenges

Effects of underfunding

- **Delay in adoption of 2003 certificate revisions**
- **Elimination of**
 - Abortion reporting system
 - Marriage and divorce statistics program
 - Occupation and industry coding of death certificate data
 - Collection of items on birth and death certificates (1 min Apgar, date of last live birth and last fetal death, education of father, etc.)
 - Current mortality sample
 - Natality and mortality followback surveys
- **Reduced completeness and timeliness of data**

Challenges

State/federal cooperation

■ States

- Funding from NCHS too late and too little
- NCHS didn't respect data ownership
- NCHS didn't understand the “real world” of data collection

■ NCHS

- States expected too much
- NCHS couldn't support the entire vital statistics system
- States weren't doing enough to improve data timeliness and data quality
- States unreasonable in restricting release of data

Challenges

State/federal cooperation

“The members of the Association are keenly aware of the part played by the States in the National Vital Statistics Program... Occasionally, however, situations arise where healthy differences of opinion may exist, and on such occasions ***the States would like to feel that they are being consulted rather than dictated to.***”

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-- American Association of
Registration Executives, 1933



Voice of reason...



Dr. Steven Schwartz, State Registrar
NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene

It only takes one visionary,
and...



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and...







“Good to Great Committee”

- Shared goal of improving the national vital statistics system
- Has been meeting regularly over several years
 - Includes leadership of NCHS and NAPHSIS

New VSCP contract

- **Requirements for annual improvements in**
 - Data timeliness
 - Data quality
- **All jurisdictions will implement the revised certificates by 2014**
 - Data collected since 2003 can be used by NCHS
- **Requirement for jurisdictions to establish and conduct a vital records quality assurance program**
- **Additional attention to fetal death data**

New contract

- **Corrective action plans rather than financial penalties**
- **Data release agreement**
- **No core and enhanced data sets**
- **Special projects to improve**
 - Data systems
 - Data quality
 - Data security
- **Requirements for NCHS to improve systems and processes**
- **Fair compensation to states, but far more focused on improvement than \$\$**

Other improvements

- Quarterly Reports
- Data Quality Workgroup
- Death surveillance pilot project
- Stay tuned...

We've come a long way

- **New, realistic contract**
- **Pathway toward improvements in the national vital statistics system**
- **Strong partnership**

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