



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Reversing the Trend: *Lowering Teen Birth Rates*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN — The rate of teenage girls in the U.S. giving birth rose in 2006 for the first time in 14 years. Planned Parenthood of West and Northern Michigan, Inc. (PPWNM) is reminding people that there is a place for teenagers to turn for comprehensive sexual education as well as protection from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The alarming numbers regarding teen pregnancies were released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in early December. Among the findings:

- **In 2006 the birth rate for teenagers aged 15-19 rose 3 percent over 2005.**
- **During that same time, the birth rate for teenagers aged 18-19 rose 4 percent.**
- **The rise in the teen birth rate follows a 14-year trend in which the rate fell by 34 percent from its all-time peak of 61.8 births per 1,000 in 1991.**

The federal and Michigan state governments continue to fund abstinence-only education in schools, a program that forbids teaching contraception. However, a recent study shows the program doesn't work. *Emerging Answers 2007: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease*, authored by Douglas Kirby, PhD, found that the only programs that delay teens from having sex are comprehensive sex education programs.

PPWNM offers services designed to help teens avoid unwanted pregnancies, including:

- **Affordable birth control methods including emergency contraception.**
- **Peer Education: a unique 40-hour training program for teens ages 14-18 that covers a wide range of issues including sexuality, relationships, communication, and healthy decision making. Teens who complete the program are empowered to share what they've learned with their peers.**
- **Parent Packs: resource material kits designed to help parents teach their children ages 3-16 about growth, development and sexuality related issues. Rental costs \$5 for two weeks.**

PPWNM has teenage graduates of our Peer Education program available to share their experiences with your audience. Contact PPWNM's president and CEO at (616) 774-7005 to set up interviews.

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More information available online at <http://www.ppwnm.org>

Our Mission: To promote and ensure reproductive and sexual health, responsibility, and freedom.