

Report: Teen pregnancy rate drops statewide

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Central Virginia had an overall drop of 25.8 percent in teen pregnancy rates for teens between ages 15 and 19 from 1995 to 2004.

The local rate is about 5 percent less than the 30 percent drop statewide reported Monday by the Virginia Department of Health.

The news release is timed to coincide with today as the Fifth Annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz (available online at www.teenpregnancy.org.)

The youth-oriented quiz includes hypothetical situations followed by choices for teens about what they would do in situations that might lead to pregnancy.

According to Health Department's Center for Health Statistics, Central Virginia -- Lynchburg and Bedford and the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell -- had 565 teen pregnancies in 1995 and 463 in 2004.

The statewide decline in the number of teenage pregnancies is good news for the Virginia Department of Health, which hopes to see the numbers continue to fall.

The drop statewide was greatest among females age 15 to 17, according to a news release from the Virginia Department of Health. In Central Virginia, the change for the age group was from 211 pregnancies in 1995 to 120 in 2004.

Among the 18- to 19-year-old group, the state decline in pregnancy rates was only about 5 percent from 1995 to 2004; half the state's localities saw increases in the teenage pregnancy rates for that age group.

Central Virginia had 328 pregnancies among those teens in 1995 and 329 in 2004.

"We don't have clear indications for the increase in this age group," said Gale Grant, director of adolescent sexual health programs for the state health department.

"We encourage communities to take a closer look at the teenager pregnancy rates and related trends in their area," she said in the news release.

This story can be found at: http://www.newsadvance.com/servlet/Satellite?c=MGArticle&cid=1137835733387&pagename=LNA/MGArticle/LNA_BasicArticle&path=!news!archive

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