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Empowering Teens to Make Healthy Choices

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

EAU CLAIRE, Wis.-May 25th, 2018– May is a time to highlight progress in reducing teen pregnancy rates nationwide. Locally, it's also a time to reflect on the progress of the efforts of our community to reduce teen pregnancy rates.

In Eau Claire County, the teen birth rate was 10.0 births per 1000 females aged 15-19 in 2016. This number has slightly climbed from 2015, when the teen birth rate was 9.0 births per 1000 females aged 15-19. Eau Claire County had previously not seen an increase in yearly teen births since 2013. Despite a slight increase from the previous year, teen birth rates in Eau Claire County remain lower than those of Wisconsin as a whole.

“It is important for parents to play a proactive role in the prevention of teen pregnancy by empowering teens to make healthy choices,” says Abby Hinz, Public Health Nurse.

A few tips for parents on how to empower their teens:

- Start talking to your pre-teen about puberty; dating, contraception, and condom usage; teen pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections; and healthy relationships.
- Be clear and open about family values and rules concerning dating and sexual behavior.
- Ensure your teen has regular visits with a medical provider.
- Talk to your teen about their future.



The Eau Claire City-County Health Department is also taking steps to approach this issue. Through *Amped Health*, the Health Department and other community partners offer the evidence-based programs, *HIP Teens* and *Safe Dates* to youth in Eau Claire County. These programs promote life skills like assertive communication and decision making, so that young people can make the best choices for their sexual health. In addition, *Safe Dates* aims to help youth identify healthy and unhealthy dating behaviors. They also learn about resources so they know where to look for help if they or a friend are experiencing teen dating abuse.

The Family Planning Clinic at the Health Department also offers education for clients (including minors) on a variety of birth control options, pregnancy testing, and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment. All services are confidential. **For more information, visit bit.ly/FamilyPlanningClinic or call 715-839-6988.**

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