

# Unintended Pregnancy

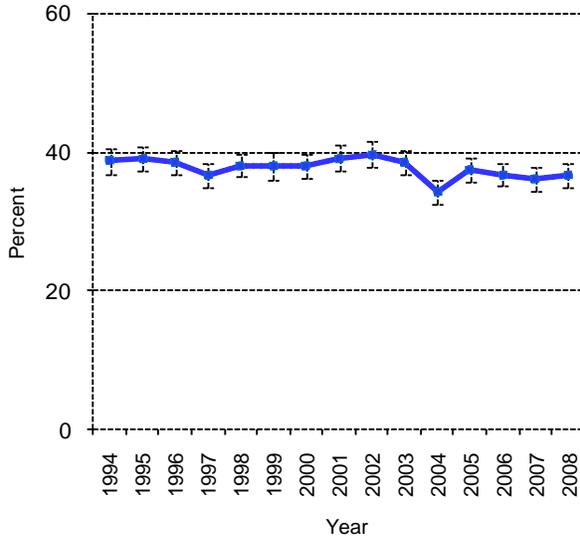
*Publicly funded services to address Unintended Pregnancy are described in Family Planning and Teen Pregnancy Prevention*

## Key Findings:

- Unintentional pregnancies are those that were not planned at the time of conception. This is an ambiguous concept that is imperfectly measured.<sup>a</sup> It is a combination of unintended or mistimed births or abortions. Findings may be influenced by who is asked and when, as well as by the outcome of the pregnancy.
  - When pregnancies are begun without planning or intent, there are fewer opportunities to prepare for an optimal outcome.
  - While young women, poor women, and some women of color have the highest rates, unintended pregnancies occur in all segments of the population.
  - In Washington, data on pregnancy intention is collected from women who have delivered live births. Women who avoid pregnancy are excluded from this measure, as are women whose pregnancies ended in miscarriages.
  - From 2006-2008, an estimated 49 percent of all pregnancies in Washington State were unintended, and an estimated 37 percent of live births were from unintended pregnancies. The proportion of live births from unintended pregnancies in Washington has not changed significantly since data collection began in 1994.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Definition:** Pregnancies that are identified by the mother as either unwanted or mistimed (occurring earlier than wanted) at the time of conception are considered unintended pregnancies.<sup>a</sup> For this report, a subset of these pregnancies are identified retrospectively using the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey, which is given to mothers 2-6 months after giving birth.
- The proportion of live births from unintended pregnancies varies significantly by age. About 66 percent of births to women less than 20 years of age were reported as unintended. This rate decreases with age, but remains sizable even among older women. The lowest rate is among women 30-34 years who report an estimated 24 percent of births were from unintended pregnancies.<sup>2</sup>
  - Black women and American Indian/Alaska Native women were significantly more likely to report their birth was from an unintended pregnancy compared to Asian, White, and Hispanic women.<sup>2, b</sup>
  - Women receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), were significantly more likely to report their delivery was from an unintended pregnancy than other women receiving Medicaid or Non-Medicaid women.<sup>2,3,b</sup>
  - Washington has not yet met the Healthy People 2010 objective to increase pregnancies that are intended to 70 percent.<sup>4</sup>

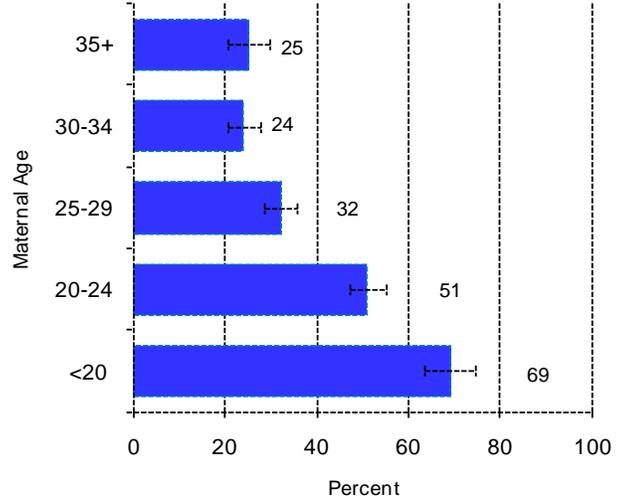
**Time Trend<sup>2</sup>**

**Live Births From Unintended Pregnancies  
WA, PRAMS 1994-2008**



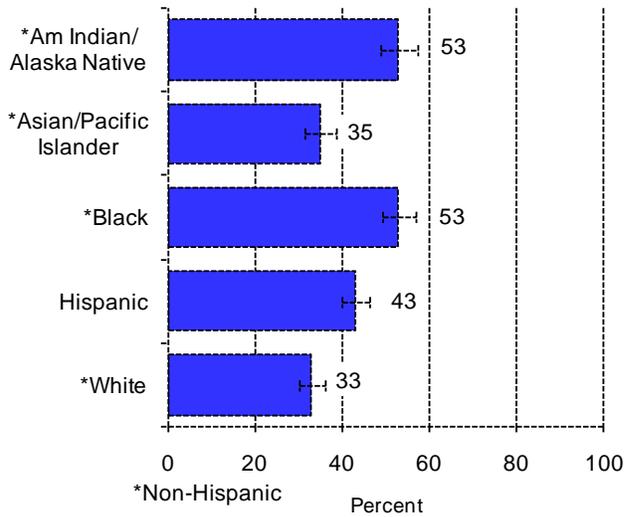
**Age<sup>2</sup>**

**Live Births From Unintended Pregnancy  
by Maternal Age  
WA, PRAMS 2006-2008**



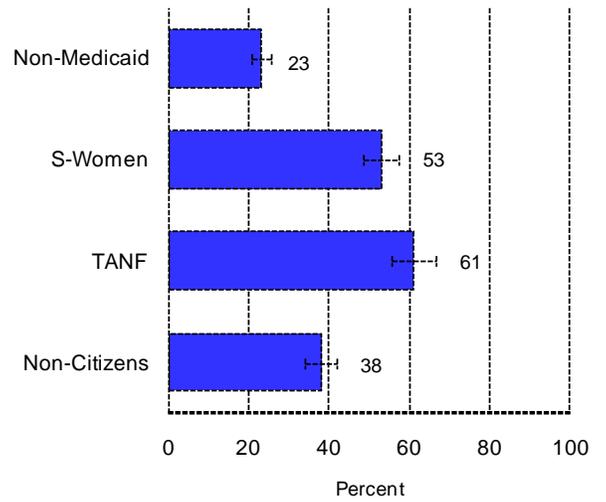
**Race and Ethnicity<sup>2</sup>**

**Live Births From Unintended Pregnancy  
by Maternal Race and Ethnicity  
WA, PRAMS 2006-2008**



**Medicaid Status<sup>2,3,c</sup>**

**Live Births From Unintended Pregnancies  
by Medicaid Program  
WA, PRAMS 2006-2008**



### *Data Sources*

1. Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (2009, November). Table 1. Induced Abortions, Live Births, and Abortion Ratios Washington State Residents, 1984 – 2008. In *Washington State Pregnancy and Induced Abortion Statistics*. Retrieved April 22, 2010, from <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/VitalStatisticsData/AbortionPregnancyData.aspx>
2. *Washington Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Phase 5, 2006-2008* [Data file]. (2010). Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Health.
3. Cawthorn, L. (2009). *Characteristics of Women Who Gave Birth in Washington State* (First Steps Database). Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

### *Endnotes*

- a. Unintended pregnancies are calculated by taking the estimated number of births that were unintended from PRAMS and multiplying this by the number of live births. The number of abortions is added to this number, and then the sum is divided by the number of live births and abortions. This estimate assumes that all reported abortions are due to unintended pregnancies, though a small percentage may be medically indicated.
- b. Significance is based on Z-score significance test with p-value less than 0.05.
- c. Medicaid women received maternity care paid for by Medicaid. They are divided into three major subgroups (from highest to lowest socioeconomic status): **S-Women** - those women who are citizens and eligible to receive Medicaid because they are pregnant and have incomes at or below 185% FPL, **TANF** - those women who are very low income (generally < 50% FPL) and receive cash assistance (TANF) in addition to Medicaid, and **Non-Citizens** - those women who are not citizens and are eligible to receive Medicaid because they are pregnant and have incomes at or below 185% FPL. Non-citizens are not eligible for TANF although their incomes are often lower than women on TANF. All three Medicaid groups have incomes below most Non-Medicaid women.

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