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WI Teen Pregnancy Rate Continues to Improve

Lower than National Average, Wisconsin Poised to Continue with Success

Madison – Providing opportunities for middle and high school students after school can help lower Wisconsin’s teen pregnancy rate. That rate dropped 32 percent from 1991 to 2005.

A new report by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, estimates the savings from the reduction of teen pregnancies in Wisconsin to be \$97 million in 2004 alone.

“Wisconsin has made great strides in reducing our teen pregnancy rate in part due to our continued investment in strong public education, preventative health care, and effective after school programming. We must build on this achievement,” said Charity Elson, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF).

Research demonstrates that youth who do not spend time in extracurricular activities after school are 37 percent more likely to become teen parents. After school programs provide positive supervised environments, build decision making skills, develop self esteem and leadership skills. The Department of Public Instruction has included \$5 million in their 2007-2009 budget for grant to start-up or improve after-schools programs.

“We know the consequences of teen pregnancy for teen moms, dads and their children are severe. Building on the opportunities for youth to engage in positive behaviors will pay-off for the state in the long run.” Elson said.

Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school, remain unmarried, and live in poverty. Children of teen mothers are more likely to be born at a low birth weight, grow up poor, live in single parent families, experience abuse and neglect and enter into the welfare system (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy).

Many Wisconsin children participate in organized activities outside school; approximately 62 percent participate in clubs, activities or sports. As Wisconsin continues its commitment to continue to lower teen births, after-school programs and activities clearly play an important role.

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families recently released report on after school in Wisconsin ***Schools Out!*** can be viewed online at:

<http://www.wccf.org/pdf/schoolsout.pdf>

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