



# Reducing Teen Births in Alcorn County

## ► Overview

Mississippi has the highest teen birth rate in the nation.<sup>1</sup> This is a problem Mississippi can solve: other states have significantly decreased their teen birth rate by adopting medically accurate, evidence-based sex education. Now, through a new state initiative called Creating Healthy and Responsible Teens (CHART), Mississippi has the opportunity to finally reduce the teen birth rate.

## ► The Problem

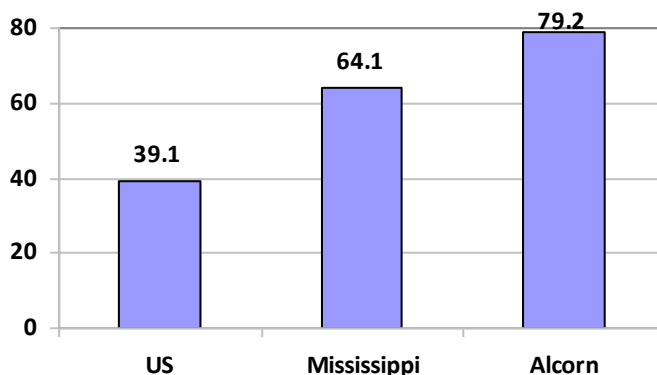
The teen birth rate in Alcorn County far exceeds the national average (79.2 vs. 39 births per 1,000).<sup>2</sup>

- Alcorn ranked 22nd in county teen birth rates in Mississippi between 2005-2009.<sup>2</sup>
- 76% of Mississippi high school students say they have had sex by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This is the highest percentage in the nation.<sup>3</sup>
- 84% of births to women 19 and younger were “unintended.”<sup>4</sup>

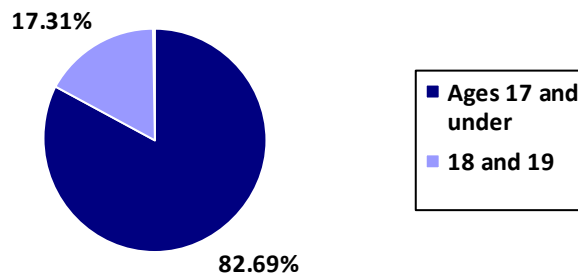
## ► The Costs

- Teen births in Alcorn County cost taxpayers approximately **\$1,537,875** in 2009.<sup>5</sup>
- Teen childbearing in Mississippi cost taxpayers **\$155,000,000** in 2009.<sup>5</sup>
- Each \$1.00 invested in teen pregnancy prevention saves taxpayers an average of \$4.34 in the first year and \$17.23 over 5 years, a **1,723% return on investment**.<sup>6</sup>

2009 Teen Birth Rates



Costs of Teen Births by Age



COMPARING COSTS: Births to teens ages 17 and under account for a disproportionate amount of society's costs for teen childbearing.<sup>7</sup>

## ► CHART: A Solution

Evidence-based, age-appropriate, and medically accurate sex education programs have been proven to change teen behavior.

- Creating Healthy and Responsible Teens (CHART) is a **free initiative** that provides a choice of evidence-based, age-appropriate, and medically accurate “abstinence-plus” sex education curriculums to Mississippi schools.
- CHART also provides **training and technical assistance** through the Mississippi State Department of Health. CHART is funded through Mississippi’s federal Personal Responsibility Education Program grant.
- The recommended curricula include lessons that **help parents talk to their kids** about making healthy decisions.

## ► How to Get CHART in Your District

1

**ADOPT the CHART POLICY:** School districts in Mississippi must adopt an “abstinence-plus” or an “abstinence-only-until-marriage” sex education policy by June 30, 2012. CHART is an “abstinence-plus” policy that meets all of the state requirements. To download the CHART policy, visit [http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/health\\_education/documents/CHARTPolicy\\_AbstinencePlus\\_July2011\\_FORM.doc](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/health_education/documents/CHARTPolicy_AbstinencePlus_July2011_FORM.doc).

2

**SELECT an APPROVED CURRICULUM:** After adopting the policy, school districts must select a curriculum approved by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). The Mississippi State Department of Health is recommending a list of CHART-approved curricula that will also be on MDE’s list for districts wishing to participate in CHART. These curricula are all evidence-based, medically accurate, and age-appropriate. They have been proven to positively change teen behavior. Districts participating in CHART will have a choice of middle or high school curriculums.

For more information on participating in CHART, visit [www.mississippifirst.org/CHART-initiative](http://www.mississippifirst.org/CHART-initiative).

## ► The Opportunity Lost

### What could \$155,000,000 a year buy for Mississippi?

- Pre-K for 42,811 children (97% of our 4-year-olds)<sup>8</sup>
- 2-year college tuition for 84,689 Mississippians<sup>9</sup>
- 4-year college tuition for 31,624 Mississippians<sup>9</sup>
- 4,871 policemen<sup>10</sup>
- 2,666 registered nurses<sup>10</sup>
- 3,677 teachers<sup>10</sup>

### What could \$1,537,875 a year buy for Alcorn County?

- Pre-K for 411 children<sup>8</sup>
- 2-year college tuition for 841 students<sup>9</sup>
- 4-year college tuition for 314 students<sup>9</sup>
- 48 policemen<sup>10</sup>
- 26 registered nurses<sup>10</sup>
- 37 teachers<sup>10</sup>

## ► Methods and Data Sources

1. CDC, National Vital Statistics Report 2009. (2009 is the most recent year for which data on Mississippi teen births is available.)
2. MSDH Vital Records: Vital Statistics 2009.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance--United States, 2009. Surveillance Summaries (2010). MMWR 2010;59 (No. SS-5). <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5905.pdf> [June 2010]
4. Office of Health Data and Research, Mississippi State Department of Health. Mississippi PRAMS Surveillance Report, Year 2006 Births, Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Health, 2006.
5. All taxpayer cost estimates are conservative estimates based on methodology developed in 1997 by a team of nationally recognized researchers lead by Rebecca Maynard at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2008, Maynard and Saul Hoffman updated cost estimates per teen birth to tax payers and to society. Costs for Mississippi counties were analyzed and provided by the Mississippi Economic Policy Center and were calculated based on the methodology developed by Maynard in 2008. For more information: Maynard, RA; SD Hoffman (2008). *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs & Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*. Second Edition. The Urban Institute Press: Washington, DC.
6. Udeh, Belinda; Mary Losch, Erica Spies. The Cost of Unintended Pregnancy in Iowa: A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Public Funded Family Planning Services. The Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa. 2009. <[http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=ppc\\_health&sei-redir=1#search=%22cost%20unintended%20pregnancy%20Iowa%20udeh%20cite%22](http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=ppc_health&sei-redir=1#search=%22cost%20unintended%20pregnancy%20Iowa%20udeh%20cite%22)>.
7. Social costs reflect changes in the resources available for the consumption of the public at large. Costs include the lower earnings for teen mothers, fathers, and their children when they reach adulthood; private medical costs and care provided to children; the resources needed to administer public assistance, changes in employment and support services; child welfare; and criminal justice.
8. As Mississippi does not have a Pre-Kindergarten system, the estimated average annual cost of Pre-K per Mississippi 4-year-old is derived from *The State of Preschool: 2010 Yearbook*, The National Institute for Early Education Research. <[http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook\\_executive\\_summary.pdf#page=7](http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook_executive_summary.pdf#page=7)>.
9. Tuition costs are annual averages. The annual average tuition for Mississippi 2-year and 4-year post-secondary education intuitions are taken from *The College Completion Agenda: Tuition, Fees, and Costs*, The College Board. <<http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/tuition-fees-and-other-costs>>.
10. Respective data on average annual salaries come from *Mississippi 2009: Occupations in Demand*, Mississippi Department of Economic Security, available through: <http://www.mdes.ms.gov/Home/docs/LMI/Publications/Occupations%20on%20Demand/MSOcinDemand.pdf>.