

GROUNDBREAKING REPORT SHOWS 20 PERCENT OF TEENAGE MOTHERS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARE VICTIMS OF ABUSE, ONE IN FOUR TEEN GIRLS IN FOSTER CARE GIVE BIRTH,

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation funds landmark report using data linkages on youth in the child welfare system leading to key new insights regarding teen births.

LOS ANGELES, NOVEMBER 12, 2013 – A first-of-its-kind study released today links birth and child protective services records in Los Angeles County revealing new insights regarding births to teens involved with the child welfare system. These new data document that one in four teens in foster care give birth before age 20 and as many as 40 percent of these young mothers have a second child during their teen years. In the county overall, 4 in 10 teen mothers have been reported as alleged victims of abuse or neglect before pregnancy and 20 percent have a history of substantiated maltreatment. Rates of abuse and neglect among children born to teens with a history of maltreatment victimization are two to more than three times the rates of children whose teen mothers had no CPS involvement.

California's Most Vulnerable Parents: A Population-Based Examination of Youth

Involved with Child Protective Services, authored by University of Southern California Professor Emily Putnam-Hornstein, takes an in-depth look at the intersection between teen births, child maltreatment, and involvement with the child protection system.

Putnam-Hornstein, along with other researchers at USC and the University of California,

Berkeley, linked and then analyzed roughly 1.5 million California birth records and 1 million CPS records, with a second phase of research focusing on the maltreatment risk of children born to adolescent mothers.

“This analysis provides a new, population-level understanding of child-welfare involvement among teen mothers and their children,” said Putnam-Hornstein. “These data underscore opportunities for targeted prevention as well as the importance of policies that support and enhance the parenting capacity of young mothers.” The report is particularly timely as it follows the recently passed legislation (SB528) to ensure accurate and comprehensive data collection on pregnant and parenting minor foster youth.

“This pioneering study provides an in-depth look at some of the most vulnerable youth in our society,” said Steven M. Hilton, chairman, president, and CEO of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. “It’s critical that we provide opportunities for these young parents to strengthen their parenting skills and make choices that can have positive effects on their lives and those of their children. With early intervention we can break the cycle of abuse that impacts maltreated children generation after generation.”

In 2012, California became one of the first states in the nation to extend foster youth status until age 21. Different programs and services will likely be required to adequately respond to the needs and circumstances of non-minor youth who remain in the foster care system, particularly in the area of parenting supports. This report finds that as many as one in three female youth in California may be parenting by the time they exit the foster care system on their 21st birthday.

“These data are a powerful call to action,” said Amy Lemley, policy director of the John Burton Foundation. “For too long California has ignored the reproductive health needs of youth in foster care. With this information, we can begin the process of developing a coherent statewide approach to address both pregnancy prevention as well as support services for teen parents and their vulnerable children.”

Funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, *California’s Most Vulnerable Parents* was led by Emily Putnam-Hornstein, Ph.D., and Julie A. Cederbaum, Ph.D., of USC and Barbara Needell, Ph.D. and Bryn King, M.S.W., of UC Berkeley.

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About the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by international business pioneer Conrad N. Hilton, who founded Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to help the world’s disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The Foundation currently conducts strategic initiatives in six priority areas: providing safe water, ending chronic homelessness, preventing substance abuse, helping children affected by HIV/AIDS, supporting transition-age youth in foster care, and extending Conrad Hilton’s support for the work of Catholic Sisters. Following selection by an independent international jury, the Foundation annually awards the \$1.5 million Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize to a nonprofit organization doing extraordinary work to reduce human suffering. From its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants, distributing \$82 million in the U.S. and around the world in 2011. The Foundation’s current assets are approximately \$2 billion. For more information, please visit www.hiltonfoundation.org.