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COMMUNITY SERVICE ADMINISTRATION  
CITY OF NEW HAVEN

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TESTIMONY OF MARIA DAMIANI, Director of Women's Health  
New Haven Health Department  
Public Health Committee Public Hearing  
February 21, 2007

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public testimony regarding continuation of funding for the community component of the Connecticut Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Project. My name is Maria Damiani, and I'm the Director of Women's Health for the City of New Haven's Department of Health. I came here today to talk about the FIMR Project because I believe it is one of the most important public health programs the New Haven Health Department has ever participated in.

FIMR is an ongoing community process for assessing, planning, improving and monitoring the service system and community resources that support and promote the health and well-being of women, infants and their families. FIMR is a tool to review and understand the reasons babies die and women experience pregnancy losses, so we can identify potentially preventable or treatable problems that contributed to the death. Although FIMR contains some elements of a traditional case-by-case review of an infant or fetal death as a biomedical problem, it goes far beyond this limited analysis to focus more fully on the identification of the social, economic and system factors unique to each community. Over the past decade, FIMR has emerged as an important national program that addresses infant and fetal death and has been effective at the community level in guiding policy.

I think the most important component of the FIMR program is that it is locally coordinated by a community committee of dedicated volunteers. Doctors, nurses, social workers, policy makers, hospital and clinic administrators, public health professionals, academia and families who have lost babies come to the table to address infant death and pregnancy loss and work to make the changes necessary to improve systems of care.

New Haven began its FIMR program in the Spring of 1999. I was the first FIMR Program Director and established the New Haven program. It was a difficult program to implement. Initially no one trusted us. Doctors and hospitals were reluctant to provide us with access to patient's charts. Women and families who had experienced an infant or fetal loss were reluctant to meet with us to tell us their stories. But we persisted, and we did the hard work of building the relationships necessary to establish trust with our community based organizations and medical providers. We paid for burials when families

couldn't afford it. We listened to their stories and helped to link them to bereavement and mental health services. We educated the providers about the difficulties families were experiencing and started a community conversation about a subject no one really wanted to talk about--babies dying. We began to recognize the importance of timely information and evidence, so we developed a relationship with the State DPH to obtain the birth, infant and fetal death vital records files and began to analyze our own data in real time. This allowed us to assess our progress and empowered us for the first time to manage and control local data. As a result we were able to move from reaction to action. We now ask and answer questions every day about the health and well-being of women and families for our entire community. We develop programs and policy based on evidence to address changing demographics and trends that go beyond infant and fetal mortality. We now track down to the neighborhood level teen pregnancy, low birth weight, prematurity, chronic disease and immigration patterns. It wasn't easy but we finally succeeded in establishing a successful, effective city-wide FIMR process. But we didn't stop there. We recognized that the population was transient and moved around within the region, so we expanded our FIMR table to include the Greater New Haven and added East Haven, Branford, North Branford, West Haven, Hamden, North Haven, Woodbridge. We're proud of our progress, and we want it to continue.

Last year DPH informed us that they were considering changes in the FIMR programs and that, DPH would no longer financially support our community-based programs as of July 2007. This withdrawal of support will likely result in the dissolution of the teams of community volunteers who have coalesced around the common goal of reducing infant and fetal deaths and improving the health and well being of women and their families.

The modest investment in FIMR, (approximately \$35,000 annually per program), has reaped enormous benefits in our communities. FIMR has brought together key providers, consumers and community leaders to facilitate positive changes in the service delivery system. Tangible improvements have been made as a direct result of the FIMR process. The FIMR networks represent the primary, if not the only mechanism dedicated to addressing prevention and service issues in women's health using evidence to drive policy. Without the State's support, it is unlikely that this vital public health function will continue.

In summary, we are asking the State to reconsider eliminating support for the community-based FIMR activities as of July 2007, and to continue this funding. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to advocate on behalf of this important program.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Maria B. Damiani



City of New Haven, Connecticut  
John D'Amico, Jr., Mayor

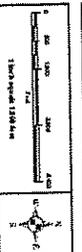


## Teen Births Ages 13-19 (2005)

Produced by the  
City of New Haven  
Geographic Information System

### Legend

- Teen Births for 2005  
Mothers' Age (years)**
- ▲ Age 14 (8)
  - Age 15 (26)
  - Age 16 (59)
  - ◆ Age 17 (59)
  - ◊ Age 18 (76)
  - Age 19 (81)
  - Age 20 (74)
- ⊠ Interstate
  - Major and High Roads
  - Subdividing Town

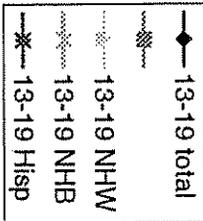
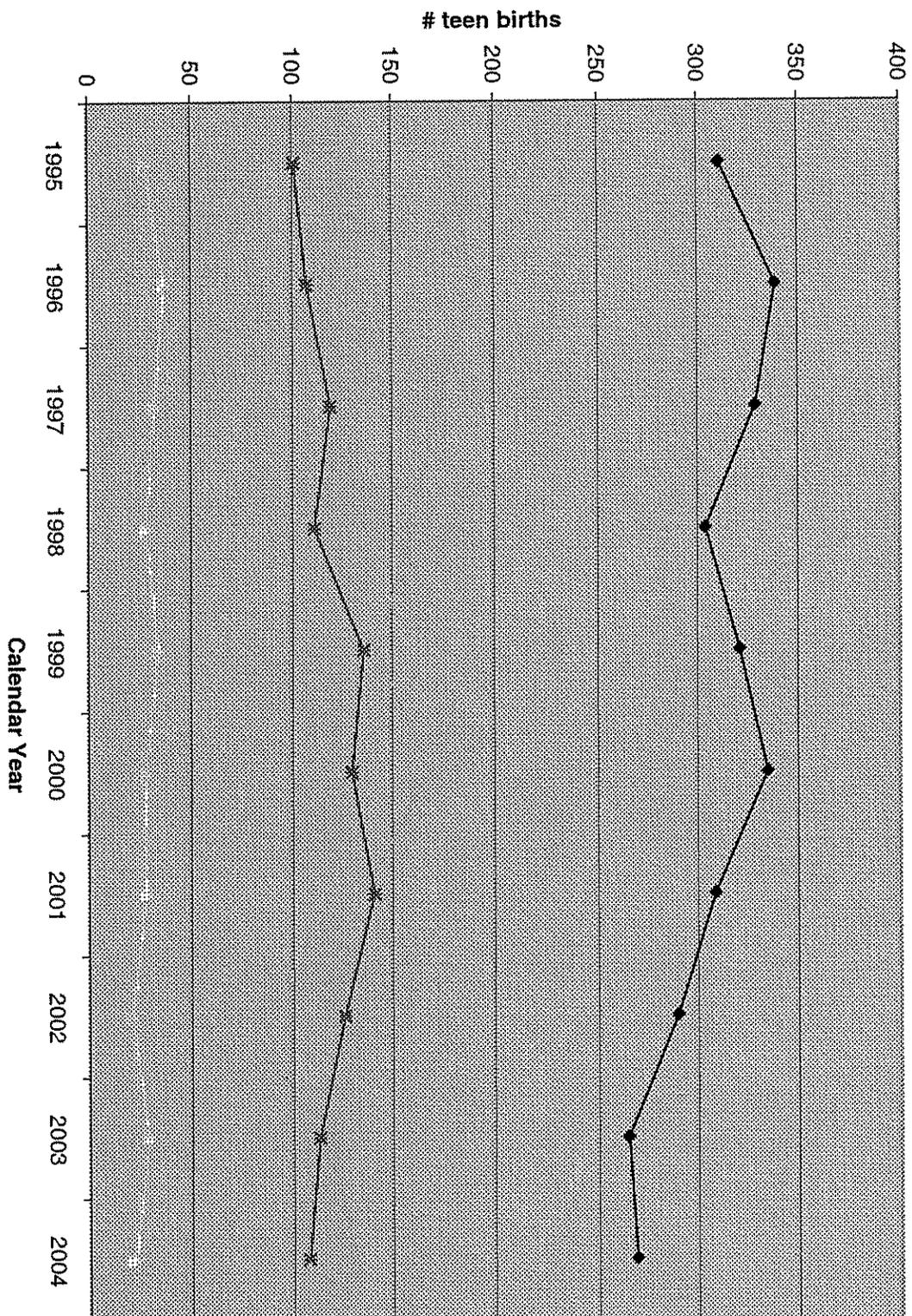


**Data Source:**  
The data for this map was derived from the 2005 Teen Births for 2005 report, which was compiled by the City of New Haven's Geographic Information System (GIS) using data from the Connecticut State Department of Health (CSDH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The data was processed and analyzed by the City of New Haven's GIS Department.

**Disclaimer:**  
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**Additional Information:**  
This map was prepared for the City of New Haven by the City of New Haven's Geographic Information System (GIS) Department. The map was prepared using ArcGIS software. The map was prepared on 11/15/05. The map was prepared by the City of New Haven's GIS Department.

# Teen Births



PRELIMINARY AND CONFIDENTIAL - Not for Distribution  
 Number of Birth Classified at "Very Low Birth Weight" by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Birth Year										Grand Total
	0	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Grand Total			
Amity		1	1	4	2	8	8	24			
Annex		3	5	2	2	2	4	11			
Beaver Hills		1	2	1	3	2	1	18			
Dixwell		2	1	1	3	2	1	6			
Downtown		2	5	2	2	2	2	12			
Dwight		1	2	2	1	3	1	12			
East Rock		2	4	4	5	3	5	6			
East Shore		3	4	11	1	6	5	20			
Edgewood		2	4	2	4	3	3	33			
Fair Haven		4	4	2	3	8	3	18			
Fair Haven Heights		2	9	3	9	10	14	47			
Hill								1			
Long Wharf		3	6	1	1	3	7	31			
Newhallville		6	3	1	1	2	12	12			
Prospect Hill		2	3	3	3	1	3	16			
Quinnipiac Meadows								9			
West River		1		2	3	1	1	8			
West Rock				2	2	2	2	8			
Westville				1	2	2	2	4			
Wooster Sq/ Mill River			1					1			
(blank)								1			
Grand Total	27	52	44	55	58	58	284				

Number of Birth Classified at "Low Birth Weight" by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Birth Year										Grand Total
	0	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Grand Total			
Amity	8	4	15	9	19	17	72				
Annex	4	6	10	12	12	11	50				
Beaver Hills	8	10	10	12	14	11	65				
Dixwell	2	10	7	5	7	15	48				
Downtown	1	8	6	3	4	1	15				
Dwight	7	14	10	7	11	8	57				
East Rock	4	11	6	12	6	12	51				
East Shore	3	3	1	8	6	4	25				
Edgewood	12	11	12	9	11	14	68				
Fair Haven	4	13	11	5	13	8	54				
Fair Haven Heights	25	27	25	24	27	23	153				
Hill	24	34	28	43	29	30	188				
Long Wharf							1				
Newhallville	16	18	14	21	19	33	121				
Prospect Hill	10	8	6	7	3	6	40				
Quinnipiac Meadows	12	9	9	7	10	12	59				
West River	2	9	14	4	12	8	49				
West Rock	7	4	3	6	6	3	29				
Westville	4	4	5	7	9	7	38				
Wooster Sq/ Mill River	4	4	8	12	7	4	39				
(blank)	2	2	2		1	1	8				
Grand Total	181	205	198	213	220	230	1227				

Birth Classified at "Low Birth Weight" by Neighborhood, Rate per 1000 births

Neighborhood	Birth Year										Grand Total
	0	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Grand Total			
Amity	101.3	69.7	205.5	116.9	206.5	171.7	147.8				
Annex	48.8	62.5	120.5	101.7	63.8	100.0	84.3				
Beaver Hills	84.1	122.0	108.7	150.0	159.1	141.0	126.7				
Dixwell	36.4	178.6	104.5	86.2	94.6	185.2	118.5				
Downtown	16.6	171.4	-	60.0	65.2	27.0	61.5				
Dwight	80.9	191.8	123.5	84.3	159.4	114.3	125.8				
East Rock	37.4	94.0	50.0	87.6	57.1	92.3	71.1				
East Shore	63.8	68.2	20.4	126.0	92.3	72.7	60.8				
Edgewood	133.3	146.7	120.0	126.8	108.9	160.9	131.7				
Fair Haven	43.5	136.3	119.6	64.9	156.6	87.0	101.9				
Fair Haven Heights	92.2	79.6	78.9	90.2	87.1	71.0	82.7				
Hill	91.1	100.9	91.8	139.8	98.3	80.4	100.1				
Long Wharf	-	-	-	-	-	-	166.7				
Newhallville	168.4	165.1	138.6	184.2	181.0	240.9	183.1				
Prospect Hill	140.8	129.0	70.6	79.5	44.1	69.0	86.8				
Quinnipiac Meadows	137.9	98.9	105.9	68.0	101.0	130.4	105.9				
West River	37.0	118.4	200.0	56.3	162.2	117.8	116.6				
West Rock	127.3	93.0	68.2	136.4	126.0	100.0	113.7				
Westville	59.8	50.8	74.8	74.6	94.7	76.7	73.2				
Wooster Sq/ Mill River	87.0	80.0	166.7	180.5	132.1	70.2	123.0				
(blank)	125.0	153.8	250.0	-	125.0	166.7	135.6				
Grand Total	87.9	107.1	102.5	108.2	111.3	110.7	104.9				

Number of Births by Neighborhood	Birth Year						Grand Total
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
Annex	79	67	73	118	82	88	487
Beaver Hills	82	86	83	118	84	91	593
Dixwell	85	82	82	80	88	78	505
Downtown	51	56	28	50	42	37	244
Edgewood	77	73	81	83	89	70	453
Fair Haven	107	117	120	137	105	130	717
Fair Haven Heights	32	44	48	64	85	55	309
Hill	90	75	100	71	101	87	524
Long Wharf	82	94	92	77	83	92	530
Newhallville	293	314	342	288	310	324	1848
Prospect Hill	298	337	305	308	301	332	1879
Quinnipiac Meadows	1	1	1	1	2	8	10
West River	95	109	101	114	105	137	681
West Rock	71	82	85	88	87	82	461
Westville	87	81	85	103	89	82	557
Wooster Sq Mill River	54	76	70	74	74	88	413
(blank)	65	43	34	44	46	30	255
(blank)	88	78	67	94	95	89	492
(blank)	48	50	48	63	53	57	317
(blank)	18	13	8	8	8	6	59
Grand Total	1832	1914	1931	1888	1878	2077	11700

Number of Teen Births by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Birth Year						Grand Total
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
(blank) Total	3	1	2	1	1	2	10
Annex Total	16	6	10	10	9	11	62
Annex Total	5	15	15	16	10	9	70
Beaver Hills Total	13	17	15	20	10	11	86
Dixwell Total	10	11	9	7	12	17	68
Downtown Total	7	11	9	7	12	2	10
Dwight Total	16	13	12	10	10	4	65
East Rock Total	5	3	10	4	2	3	27
East Shore Total	2	2	2	2	1	1	9
Edgewood Total	15	13	12	10	7	8	63
Fair Haven Heights	16	18	11	7	10	8	72
Fair Haven Total	81	88	65	41	58	56	348
Hill Total	81	83	81	64	53	70	422
Long Wharf Total	20	24	22	18	24	27	135
Newhallville Total	4	8	1	9	6	3	31
Prospect Hill Total	13	4	11	13	17	8	66
Quinnipiac Meadows Total	13	12	13	13	19	18	88
West River Total	13	7	8	10	11	3	52
West Rock Total	3	2	2	2	3	2	18
Westville Total	7	2	5	7	8	12	39
Wooster Sq Mill River Total	335	309	290	265	268	273	1741
Grand Total	335	309	290	265	268	273	1741

Teen Births by Neighborhood, % of all live births

Neighborhood	% of all live births						Grand Total
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
(blank) Total	3	1	2	1	1	2	10
Annex Total	20.3%	9.0%	13.7%	13.0%	8.8%	11.1%	12.7%
Annex Total	6.1%	15.6%	16.1%	13.6%	10.6%	7.5%	11.8%
Beaver Hills Total	15.3%	20.7%	16.3%	25.0%	11.4%	14.1%	17.0%
Dixwell Total	18.2%	19.8%	13.4%	18.2%	21.0%	17.1%	17.1%
Downtown Total	13.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	5.4%	4.1%
Dwight Total	20.6%	17.8%	14.8%	12.0%	14.5%	5.7%	14.3%
East Rock Total	4.7%	2.8%	6.3%	2.9%	1.9%	2.3%	3.8%
East Shore Total	6.3%	4.5%	4.1%	3.1%	0.0%	1.8%	2.8%
Edgewood Total	18.7%	17.3%	12.0%	14.1%	8.9%	6.9%	12.0%
Fair Haven Heights	18.6%	18.1%	12.0%	9.1%	12.0%	8.7%	13.8%
Fair Haven Total	20.8%	21.7%	16.0%	15.4%	17.8%	17.3%	18.9%
Hill Total	30.7%	24.8%	20.0%	20.8%	17.8%	21.1%	22.5%
Long Wharf Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	33.3%	30.0%
Newhallville Total	21.1%	22.0%	21.8%	15.8%	22.9%	19.7%	20.4%
Prospect Hill Total	5.8%	12.9%	1.2%	10.2%	8.8%	3.4%	6.7%
Quinnipiac Meadows Total	14.9%	4.4%	12.9%	12.8%	17.2%	8.7%	11.8%
West River Total	24.1%	15.8%	18.6%	18.3%	25.7%	23.5%	20.8%
West Rock Total	23.8%	16.3%	23.5%	22.7%	22.8%	10.0%	20.4%
Westville Total	4.4%	2.8%	8.0%	2.1%	3.2%	2.2%	3.7%
Wooster Sq Mill River Total	15.2%	4.0%	10.4%	11.1%	11.3%	21.1%	12.3%
Grand Total	335	309	290	265	268	273	1741