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MEDIA STATEMENT TEEN PREGNANCY

Following the release the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing's Report, that includes the latest figures on teen birth-rates, SHINE SA believes that a decrease in the teen birth-rate as indicated in the report, is a positive outcome from the study.

"A decrease may reflect better sexual health information for young people including education in schools, and better access to sexual health services", said Dr Amy Moten, Coordinator, Medical Education at SHINE SA.

"Increased access to Long Acting reversible Contraception for young people, as promoted by Family Planning Alliance Australia, is also a significant factor in reducing teen pregnancy rates", Dr Moten said.

Low socio-economic status can be a marker of poor health outcomes overall. This increases with remoteness from metropolitan areas and Indigenous status. This has been shown in previous studies and also is supported by national data regarding cervical screening that shows that low socio-economic and Indigenous status reduces the rate of screening compared to people from a higher socioeconomic areas.

Social determinants of health are linked to social and economic factors that influence health. Young people from a lower socioeconomic area are likely to have poorer health literacy, lower levels of education and poorer access to health services including contraception. These have all been shown to be linked to an increased birth rate over all ages. Barriers to access health and contraceptive services such as cost and availability of these services increase with distance from metropolitan areas.

"Generally, teen mums often face increased stigma about being a parent and should be supported in their decision to continue parenting", Dr Moten said.

"At SHINE SA, we provide pregnancy testing, counselling and advice. When a young person is pregnant they can discuss their options and be referred to appropriate services. For a young person continuing to parent we would refer them to the Metropolitan Youth Health Service for example, which has a Young Parenting program", Dr Moten said.

SHINE SA believes that young mums should be supported to continue their education as completing secondary school after pregnancy has been shown to improve long term outcomes in both mother and child.

Dr Amy Moten, Coordinator Medical Education, SHINE SA