



Prenatal Care in Rockbridge

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Introduction

- Prenatal care is vital to the health of a child and is an issue that needs to be addressed within Rockbridge County.
- Good care in the first trimester is especially important for the perinatal health of the child.

Background

- Over the ten year period from 2001 to 2011, 33,788 babies were born to residents in the county, however were not born in hospitals in the county
- Rockbridge county does not currently have a hospital that delivers babies.
- The county also does not currently have a resident obstetrician, putting all prenatal care demands on other private physicians and the health department.

Objective:

- Analyze access and resources to provide prenatal services in Rockbridge County.

Methods

1. Secondary analysis of birth and population data from Virginia Vital Statistics for Rockbridge County, Lexington and Buena Vista Cities was analyzed.
2. Literature review to explore reasons for lack of access to prenatal services.

Results

- 18.5% of mothers in Rockbridge county did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy (Figure 1).
- The number of births in the area increased until 2007; subsequently birth rates decreased significantly (Figure 2).
- The data shows that 33,762 births occurred outside of Rockbridge county, and people travel out of the county to deliver their babies.
- 85.6% of women in Rockbridge received prenatal care from a private physician (Figure 3).

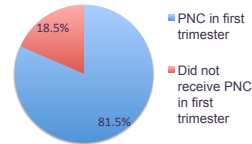


Figure 1. Percentage of mothers in Rockbridge who received prenatal care versus those who did not. 18.5%, nearly one fifth of women, did not receive care in the first trimester.

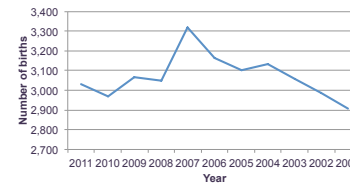


Figure 2. Number of births in Rockbridge over a 10 year period.

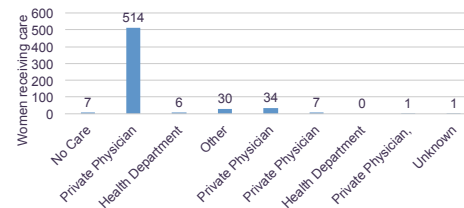


Figure 3. Sources of prenatal care in Rockbridge County.

Conclusion/Discussion

1. With almost 20% of Rockbridge County mothers failing to receive prenatal care in the first trimester, there is a need for better local access to prenatal services.
2. Early pregnancy acknowledgement was associated with significantly increased odds of starting prenatal care early in the literature.
3. Since 85.6% of women in Rockbridge received prenatal care from a private physician, doctors need to educate patients on the importance of early pregnancy detection and prenatal care.

Recommendations

1. Provide funding for a prenatal care center within Rockbridge County.
2. Create incentives for family physicians to provide prenatal care in areas where there is no obstetrician.

References

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