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## Changes in Abortions and Births and the Texas Parental Notification Law

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### ABSTRACT

**Background** On January 1, 2000, Texas began enforcement of a law that requires physicians to notify a parent of a minor child seeking an abortion at least 48 hours before the procedure.

**Methods** We assessed changes in the rates in Texas of abortions and births (events per 1000 age-specific population) before enforcement of the parental notification law (1998 to 1999) and after enforcement (2000 to 2002). We did this by comparing the rate changes among minors 15 to 17 years of age at the time of conception (i.e., those who were subject to the law) with those of teens 18 years of age at the time of conception (i.e., those who were not subject to the law).

**Results** After enforcement of the law, abortion rates fell by 11 percent among 15-year-olds (rate ratio, 0.89; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.83 to 0.94), 20 percent among 16-year-olds (rate ratio, 0.80; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.76 to 0.85), and 16 percent among 17-year-olds (rate ratio 0.84; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.80 to 0.87), relative to the rates among 18-year-olds. Among the subgroup of minors 17.50 to 17.74 years of age at the time of conception (who would have been subject to the parental notification law in early pregnancy), birth rates rose by 4 percent relative to those of teens 18.00 to 18.24 years of age (rate ratio, 1.04; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.00 to 1.08). The adjusted odds ratio for having an abortion after 12 weeks' gestation among

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minors 17.50 to 17.74 years of age as compared with 18-year-olds was 1.34 (95 percent confidence interval, 1.10 to 1.62).

*Conclusions* The Texas parental notification law was associated with a decline in abortion rates among minors from 15 to 17 years of age. It was also associated with increased birth rates and rates of abortion during the second trimester among a subgroup of minors who were 17.50 to 17.74 years of age at the time of conception.

## Source Information

From Baruch College (T.J.) and the Graduate Center (S.C.), City University of New York; and the National Bureau of Economic Research (T.J., R.K.) — both in New York; and the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago (R.K.).

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