



FHOP is developing ways to make the MCAH indicators more meaningful to local health jurisdictions and accessible to the public. We have been testing different methods to make a series of maps comparing jurisdictions to the same standard in the 1995-1997 and 2004-2006 periods. These maps are intended to simultaneously show changes for a particular jurisdiction and in comparison to others.

This test map compares the two time periods using birth rates for the 15-17 year old teen population. It gives a good sense of the degree to which teen birth rates have declined, a rare example of good news in an otherwise difficult and challenging time.

The map was produced using a method that adjusts for small numbers. We standardized rates relative to the HP 2010 Objective and the degree of certainty about the rate. Certainty is derived from the confidence interval: A jurisdiction with a large population will have a narrow interval and one with a small population will have a wide interval. We standardized rates by converting them into a number reflecting deviations above or below the objective. Then, we ranked the result into quintiles each representing 11-12 counties. The value to the right of each color block tells us that an equal number of counties in the quintile had a rate above and below this value. Although actual rates in a quintile may spill over into another, the adjustment places the jurisdiction in the quintile shown. For example, rates in the lowest quintile range from 5.5 to 30, but after taking both number of cases and population into account, this entire group fell into the lowest quintile with a median of 14.4.