

Twin Falls Times News, Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011 – by Laurie Welch

Cassia Regional nurses battle high Mini-Cassia teen pregnancies

BURLEY — Nurses at a Burley birth center are working to provide pregnant teens and new mothers knowledge they need to care for their children and deal with the stresses of teen parenthood.

The new teen pregnancy outreach program at Cassia Regional Medical Center helps address a Mini-Cassia need, as from 2006 to 2008, Minidoka County had the second-highest teen pregnancy rate in the state. During those years, nearly 45 of every 1,000 Minidoka County girls age 15-17 were impregnated. In neighboring Cassia County, the rate was 26 pregnancies per 1,000 teens.

“As nurses they see teen mothers who come in with little prenatal care and they see instances of shaken baby in the community, as well as child abuse,” said Tricia Bredesen, manager of Cassia Regional’s Birth Center. “The staff is really devastated when something like that occurs. They want to do anything they can to help prevent things like that from happening and help these young parents deal with the stresses.”

The team includes 23 nurses and partners with both Mini-Cassia public school districts to coordinate its Teen Pregnancy Educational Outreach Program, a series of monthly nurse-led programs for pregnant teens and new mothers. Minidoka County School District nurse Laurie Stimpson said 40 district students were impregnated last year, with about 17 so far this year.

“I think it will be a good program. They are going to offer it after school, so we’re hoping the girls will stay for it,” Stimpson said. “We are also hoping they will offer some birth-control information because statistics show that a lot of teen moms get pregnant again within two years after giving birth.”

Class topics cover an array of issues, from infant development and nutrition to stress reduction, pregnancy prevention and how to calm crying babies. Flyers with additional program information are available at schools in both counties.

The effort comes on the heels of the team’s “Bundles of Love” program in 2010, which brought infant-care packages to 67 low-income families.

“We really hope this program will be well-received by the students and will make a difference,” Bredesen said.