

Introduction:

User Guide to the 2005 Natality Public Use File

Introduction

United States birth data available in this file represent all births registered in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and New York City. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) receives these data as electronic files, prepared from individual records processed by each registration area, through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program.

Birth data for the U.S. are limited to births occurring within the United States to U.S. residents and nonresidents. Births to nonresidents of the United States are excluded from all tabulations by place of residence. Births occurring to U.S. citizens outside of the United States are not included in this file. For more detailed information on the 2005 Natality file see the *Detailed Technical Notes - natality: United States, 2005*.

Data for Vermont shown in "Births: Final Data for 2005" and included in the 2005 natality data file are based on an incomplete file of records; the total number of Vermont resident births is under-reported by about 3 percent. Information based on the complete file of Vermont resident births is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/2005VTupdate.htm>.

Availability of Geographic Detail

Beginning with the 2005 data year, the U.S. micro-data natality file no longer includes geographic detail (e.g., mother's state of residence). Tabulations of birth data by residence of mother for states and for counties with populations of 100,000 or more are available using the VitalStats online data access tool described below. Certain geographic level data may also be available upon request: See "NCHS Data Release and Access Policy for Microdata and Compressed Vital Statistics Files, 2007," available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/NCHS_DataRelease.htm.

The possessions file, which includes data on births occurring in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, includes limited geographic detail. Information identifying individual possessions and counties (or their equivalent) with populations of 100,000 or more by

place of occurrence and residence are available in this file. This geographic detail by place of residence is also available using the VitalStats online data access tool described below.

VitalStats

VitalStats is an online data access tool which provides access to a collection of interactive pre-built tables, and the ability to build tables from over 100 public use birth variables. Interactive charting and mapping tools are a key part of the system, and provide powerful options for visualizing and manipulating tabulated data. Tabulated data can be exported to Excel for further analysis. VitalStats is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/VitalStats.htm>.

The 1989 and 2003 Revisions of the U.S. Certificate of Live Birth

This data file includes data based on both the 1989 Revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth (unrevised) and the 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth in 2003 (revised). The 2003 revision is described in detail elsewhere. (See the 2003 Revision website at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vital_certs_rev.htm). As of January 1, 2005 12 states had implemented the revised certificate: Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York (excluding New York City), Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington, and Puerto Rico. One additional state, Vermont, implemented the revised birth certificate in 2005, but after January 1. The 12 revised states, for which data are available for all of 2005, represent 31 percent of all births. Where comparable, revised data are combined with data from the remaining 37 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City. (Revised data are denoted by “R;” unrevised data are denoted by “U” in the “Rev” column of the file layout.) Where data for the 1989 and 2003 certificate revisions are not comparable (e.g., educational attainment of the mother), unrevised and revised data are shown in separate fields in the data file. For Vermont which revised in 2005, but after January 1, data which are not comparable across revisions are excluded from all tabulations wherever reporting flags are used. Also see discussion of reporting flags. Data items based on the 1989 Revision are shown

in tables U-1- U-7 Selected items new to the 2003 Revision are included in this data file; see tables R-1- R-6 and the report *Expanded Health Data from the New Birth Certificate, 2005* (1). For further information please contact us at births@cdc.gov or (301)458-4111.

Incomplete National Reporting: Selecting Reporting Areas for the 2005 natality file

The use of reporting flags

As a result of the delayed, phased transition to the 2003 Standard Certificate of Live Birth, the 2005 natality file includes data for reporting areas that use the 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth (revised) and data for reporting areas that use the 1989 Standard Certificate of Live Birth (unrevised). Although many data items are comparable across certificate revisions and are available for the entire United States, many items have more limited reporting areas. For example, information on pre-pregnancy and gestational diabetes, a revised data item, is available for 12 States for 2005; information on amniocentesis, an unrevised item not included on the revised certificate, is available for 37 States, the District of Columbia, and New York City. Reporting flags were developed to help the user more readily identify reporting areas for items with less than national reporting. The national reporting area is defined as the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and New York City; (NYC is an independent reporting area from New York State). Reporting flags are available for most items on the file. Positions for reporting flags are noted along with each data item in the file layout.

Translating “blanks”

In the 2005 natality file, for data items which are not common or comparable across certificate revisions, births to residents of a revised state occurring in an unrevised state, and births to residents in an unrevised state occurring in a revised state, are represented by “blanks.” Blanks should be treated as “unknowns” for tabulations.

In sum, the correct use of reporting flags and translation of blanks will result in an accurate tally of births for items with incomplete national reporting. For an example of SAS code that may be used to incorporate the correct use of reporting flags and the translation of blanks see below.

Example of SAS code using reporting flags (and translating blanks)

The example below is for the revised prenatal care item. Prenatal care data based on the revised certificate are not considered comparable to data based on the unrevised certificate, and are presented separately (see also Births: Final Data for 2005).

Accordingly, use of the reporting flag for this item will produce 2005 data for the month prenatal care began for the 12 revised States which had implemented the revised Certificate as of January 1, 2005. Data for states which implemented the revised certificates after January 1 (Vermont), are excluded from tabulations when reporting flags are used.

Sample SAS program

```
01 DATA work;
02     INFILE 'c:nat04us.dat' LRECL=1500;
03     INPUT
04         restatus 138
05         precare 245-246
06         f_mpcb 668;
07
08     /*Exclude foreign residents*/
09     IF restatus NE 4;
10     /*Select reporting area*/
11     IF f_mpcb=1;
12     /*Convert blanks to unknown*/
13     IF precare=. THEN precare=99;
14
15 PROC FREQ;
16     TABLE precare;
17 RUN;
```

In this example, “restatus” is used to exclude births to foreign residents (this is standard practice for all NCHS tabulations). Also in this example, blanks are represented by numeric values SAS code = (.). However, for some items in the file, e.g., obstetric procedures, blanks are represented by character values for which the SAS code is empty quotes (‘ ’).

References

1. Menacker F, Martin JA. Expanded health data from the new birth certificate, 2005. National vital statistics reports; vol 56 no 13. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.