

## DEFINITION

*Teen deaths* is the number of deaths from all causes among teens ages 15 to 19, per 100,000 teens. The data are reported by place of residence, not place of death.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Adolescents' health and safety can be threatened by a variety of risk behaviors, including alcohol, drug abuse, and violence.<sup>1</sup> Teens' emotional health, including mood disorders and depression, further impacts their safety.<sup>2</sup> Nationally, the most prevalent causes of teen deaths are motor vehicle collisions, homicides, and suicides, all of which are preventable.<sup>3,4</sup>

Factors that protect against teen deaths include parent involvement, access to mental health services, state regulated teen driving programs, as well as violence and substance abuse prevention programs. School, community, and therapeutic programs such as support groups, parent education interventions, and community improvement initiatives can reduce risk behaviors and support positive youth development.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

Between 2011 and 2015, there were 97 deaths of teens ages 15 to 19 in Rhode Island, a rate of 26.0 per 100,000 teens. Thirty-five (36%) of these teens lived in the four core cities and 62 (64%) lived in the remainder of the state.<sup>8,9</sup> Of these 97 teen deaths, 35 (36%) were due to unintentional injuries, 27 (28%) were due to

intentional injuries (18 suicides and nine homicides), 26 (27%) were due to disease, seven (7%) were due to overdose, and two (2%) were of other or unknown causes.<sup>10</sup>

According to the *2015 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 11% of Rhode Island high school students reported attempting suicide one or more times in the 12 months before the survey was administered, with females (13%) reporting more attempts than males (8%).<sup>11</sup> Rhode Island has the eighth highest self-reported suicide attempt rate among ranked states in 2015.<sup>12</sup> Of the 18 youth ages 15 to 19 who died from suicide during that time, 14 were male and four were female.<sup>13</sup> Nationally, depression and suicide among adolescents have increased in recent years, with more females reporting symptoms of depression and attempting suicide nationally than males.<sup>14</sup> Mental health problems, such as depression and substance abuse, are associated with an increased risk of suicide among youth.<sup>15</sup>

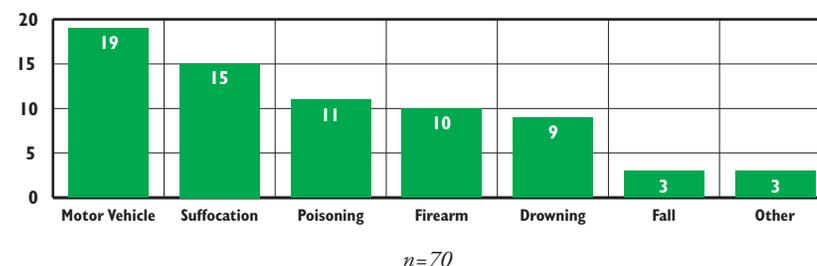
Teen Death Rate (per 100,000 Youth Ages 15-19)		
	2005	2015
RI	36	31
US	64	48
National Rank*		4th
New England Rank**		3rd

\*1st is best; 50th is worst

\*\*1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, wonder.cdc.gov

**Injury Deaths by Cause, Teens Ages 15 to 19, Rhode Island, 2011-2015**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2011-2015. This chart and the first bullet below report deaths of teens residing in Rhode Island. Data reported in the second, third, and fourth bullets below reflect teen motor vehicle deaths that occurred in Rhode Island, regardless of residence. Data for 2015 are provisional.

- ◆ Between 2011 and 2015 in Rhode Island, 60% of the 70 teen deaths caused by injury were unintentional. Twenty-seven percent of all injury deaths involved motor vehicles.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ Among the 20 teens ages 15 to 19 killed in Rhode Island motor vehicle crashes between 2011 and 2015, 12 were driving, seven were passengers in vehicles driven by others, and one was a bicyclist.<sup>17</sup>
- ◆ Five (25%) of the teen drivers who died in motor vehicle crashes in Rhode Island between 2011 and 2015 had been drinking and two teen fatalities occurred with adult drivers who had been drinking.<sup>18</sup>
- ◆ Seven (44%) of teen drivers and passengers killed in automobile accidents in Rhode Island between 2011 and 2015 were not wearing a seatbelt.<sup>19</sup>
- ◆ In 2015, 46% of Rhode Island high school students reported texting or e-mailing while driving on at least one day in the month prior to taking the *Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey*. Eighteen percent reported riding in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking in the prior month, and 6% reported that they never or rarely wear a seatbelt while riding in a car driven by someone else.<sup>20</sup> In 2015, Rhode Island ranked 28th, 11th, and fifth best among ranked states on these respective measures.<sup>21</sup>

## References

<sup>15</sup> Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2014). *Healthy People 2020: Adolescent health*. Retrieved February 23, 2017, from www.healthypeople.gov

(continued on page 182)