

POPULATION TODAY

News, numbers, and analysis

The Coming Age of Older Women

By CHARLES DERVARICS

Thanks to the baby-boom generation, most Americans recognize the challenges posed by an aging society. But getting far less attention is the rapid aging of the world at large, in particular the growth in the number of older women and the potential effects on issues that range from financial security to health care.

Worldwide, the number of women who are 60 years old and over will more than double, reaching 645 million in the next quarter century, the U.S. Census Bureau says. In developed countries, older women now account for one in 10 residents, but that proportion will change to one in seven by 2025—and one in six for countries such as Italy and Japan.

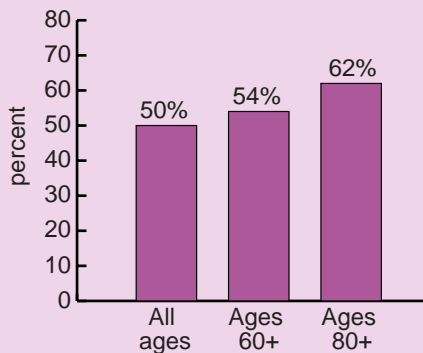
Factors such as women's longer life expectancy account for much of this trend, while lower fertility rates in the developing world will leave many countries with a rapidly aging citizenry.

"We expect that nearly three-quarters of these women will be living in what is known today as the developing world," said Victoria Velkoff, a Census Bureau analyst. In at least 75 developing countries, the statistics are sobering: a projected 150 percent growth rate for older women during the next three decades.

The projections have not gone unnoticed among leaders at the United Nations, who have chosen 1999 as the

International Year of Older Persons and have launched a campaign to raise awareness of the needs of the elderly. The campaign will focus on problems endemic to the changing world population, including what some experts call the "feminization of aging."

Women's Share of World Population at Specified Ages, 2025



Source: Yvonne J. Gist and Victoria A. Velkoff, U.S. Census Bureau International Programs Center, "Gender and Aging: Demographic Dimensions," IB/97-3 (December 1997).

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Older Women

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“Women have longer life expectancies than men but are more likely to be economically vulnerable,” said Rosemary Lane, program officer on aging in the UN division for social policy and development. Because their work lives often include interruptions to care for young children or elderly parents, many women have limited pensions for their own golden years, even in the developed world.

“There is a growing realization of this problem because of the poverty rates,” Lane said. “Governments are just beginning to talk about this.”

Trends

Boys outnumber girls in virtually all countries of the world, but the tide begins to turn at about age 30 or 35, and the gap widens with age. According to experts, men face greater risk from heart disease, hazardous jobs, alcohol or tobacco use, and other factors that remain unclear. Regardless of the reasons, however, new Census Bureau statistics highlight some dramatic trends:

- In more than half of all developed countries, female life expectancy at birth is at least 80 years, whereas only 2 percent of these countries project that longevity for men. Female life expectancy is 80 or more years in only 7 percent of developing countries, and no developing countries show a comparable life expectancy for men.
- On average compared with men, women live seven years longer in the developed world and three years longer in developing nations.
- In developed countries, 19 percent of all older women fall in the “oldest old” category for people ages 80 and above, but by 2025, the figure will be almost 25 percent. In developing countries, 9 percent of all older women are ages 80 and over, and the number of these women is expected to triple by 2025.

Older women also are likely to have lost a spouse, an issue that affects social services, housing, and even caregiving routines. A typical ex-

ample is Indonesia, where 58 percent of older women but only 11 percent of older men are widowed, the bureau says. Additionally, one-sixth of women in some baby-boom cohorts in the United States are childless, a pattern also seen in Scandinavia, in parts of the Caribbean, and in several Central African countries. Many widows live alone, at least until they need a caregiver, typically another female.

“Caregiving is primarily a female issue for a number of reasons,” Lane said. “Women make up the majority of caregivers and receivers, and their numbers are growing.”

“Gender and Aging: Mortality and Health,” published by the U.S. Census Bureau in October 1998, points to policy aspects of caring for older women. The paper notes: “Older women, many of whom are illiterate and poor, are increasingly vulnerable, particularly in societies where social custom and family law discriminate against women.” Authors Kevin Kinsella and Yvonne Gist also write: “In particular, countries need to plan for the health needs of older women.”

That health focus is one element of the United Nations’ new effort, which includes a series of worldwide conferences and action plans during the 1999 observance of the elderly.

UN experts are quick to point out that their first task is education, so that world leaders better grasp the problem. They note that senior citizens represent 10 percent of the world’s population now but will account for 22 percent by the middle of the 21st century. The trend is even more pronounced in Europe, where seniors will account for 35 percent of all citizens.

And just as important, they say, is this conclusion: that senior citizens will outnumber children by 2050—a potential economic drain on society as well as a major social problem resulting from a shortage of caregivers.

Recommendations

At a meeting in Malta a year ago, UN population experts talked about a campaign to improve the lives of all women as a first step to prepare for the future. Such a campaign should target basic education and literacy,

greater access to health care, and changes in traditional societal roles.

“To prevent poverty and illness in old age, girls and young and middle-aged women need equal access to education, income, health care, and nutrition,” said a UN report that summarized the discussions.

Lane is among those who see a prime opportunity for action in 1999 because it is the International Year of Older Persons. So far, experts convened by the United Nations recommend the following:

- More research on the health and financial needs of older women;
- An increased focus on quality health care and illness prevention;
- Collection of more gender-specific data on employment and income distribution; and
- Laws and education programs that better integrate all senior citizens into mainstream society.

Such changes are particularly vital in developing countries, where falling birth rates, increasing urbanization, and greater development may curb many traditional practices of caring for the elderly within the family. Greater acceptance of men as caregivers may help as well. “In some countries, men could lose prestige by caring for dependent relatives,” the report noted.

Population experts also are beginning to take a harder look at the oldest of the old, said Mary Beth Weinberger, a UN population analyst. Reliable estimates show that women account for the majority of this age group, but until recently, even UN demographers had little information about these individuals.

Collecting more worldwide data on the oldest of the old is now a priority, according to Weinberger.

“Older persons ages 80 and over are the fastest growing group in the world,” a new UN report says. And at this age level, Weinberger adds, “Women are more and more predominant.” ■

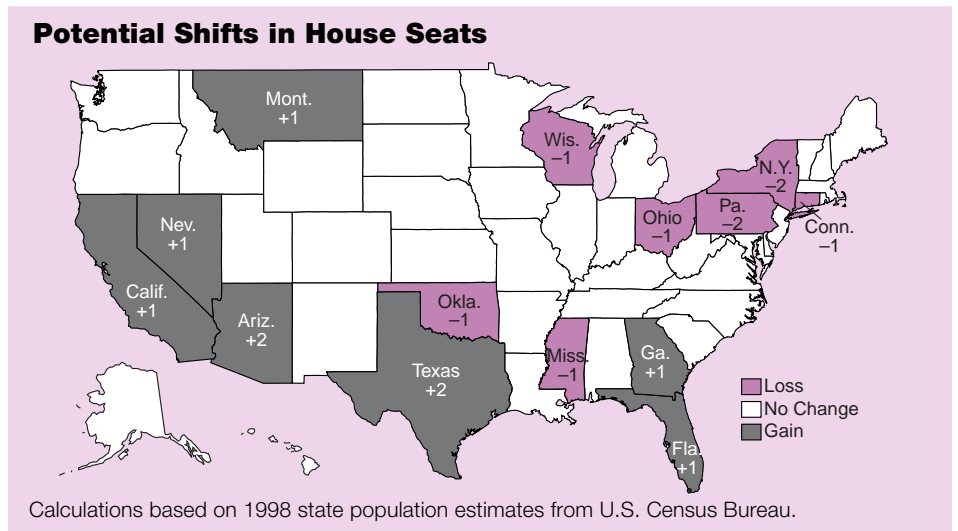
Charles Dervarics is a Washington, DC-based freelance writer.

Reapportionment Headed South, West

By MARK MATHER

New state population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the population continues to move south and west, a trend that is likely to affect the distribution of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives after the 2000 Census. The number of representatives from a given state is determined by the relative size of the population in that state. As the population shifts to states in the South and the West, so does political representation.

If the 1998 estimates foretell the 2000 Census results, 14 states will gain or lose House seats. In the Northeast, Pennsylvania and New York would each lose two seats and Connecticut would lose one seat. In the Midwest, seats would be lost in both Ohio and Wisconsin. The South would add two seats in Texas and one seat each in Florida and Georgia. Mississippi and Oklahoma would each lose a seat. The West would gain the most representatives, with two new seats in Arizona and one additional seat each in California, Montana, and Nevada.



Many of the population shifts documented in the latest Census Bureau estimates have been going on for years, resulting in dramatic shifts in political power. New York has lost 10 congressional seats since 1960, while California has gained 14 seats. Florida and Texas also have scored big gains.

Since 1990, population has grown fastest in Nevada, with a 45 percent

increase in population, and in Arizona, with a 27 percent increase. ■

For more information:

Visit the Census Bureau Web site at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/apportionment.html>.

Mark Mather is a policy analyst at PRB.

Abortion Restrictions May Undermine Welfare Reform

More restrictive abortion laws may have led to an increase in the number of single mothers, even in the face of new welfare reform laws that make unmarried childbearing more costly, according to *State Abortion Policy, Geographic Access to Abortion Providers, and Changing Family Formation*, a new study by Pennsylvania State University's Population Research Institute.

"By making unmarried childbearing more 'costly,' welfare reform has fueled the demand for abortion, while at the same time abortion laws have restricted access," Daniel Lichter, co-author of the study, said.

"As a result, an increasing number of unmarried women on welfare have chosen childbearing over abortion."

The study is based on county rates of female-headed families from the 1980 and 1990 censuses, excluding those in Alaska and Hawaii. The authors found that the number of abortions dropped in counties where abortion laws had become stricter.

The authors also found that restrictive abortion laws and geographic barriers to abortion discouraged women from undergoing the procedure, thereby increasing the number of female-headed families and single mothers.

States now can require abortion providers to notify the parents of minors who have abortions, to restrict Medicaid funding for abortions, and to establish 24-hour waiting periods. Abortion has thus become a less viable option for some single women.

"Our findings suggest that the public policy goal of reducing unmarried childbearing and female-headed families may be partly undermined by the increasing geographic and legal barriers aimed at discouraging abortion," Diane McLaughlin, co-author of the report, said. ■

For more information:

Contact Daniel Lichter, Population Research Institute, Pennsylvania State University, phone: 814/863-3529; e-mail: lichter@pop.psu.edu.

CENSUS 2000: REACHING OUT TO YOU

With the Supreme Court decision on whether sampling will be allowed in the 2000 Census still pending, two noncontroversial U.S. Census Bureau efforts are moving ahead. Both aim to increase response rates.

This is Your Future. Don't Leave It Blank.



The above slogan and picture, for the Census 2000 campaign, were created for the Census Bureau by a private firm that will also conduct a paid advertising campaign for the upcoming census.

The firm, Young & Rubicam, Inc. (Y&R), based in New York, is developing ads for radio, television, print, and other media to reach all Americans and motivate them to complete and return the census.

The shift to a paid advertising campaign—in the past, the bureau relied on public service announcements prepared by the Ad Council—is intended to boost the mail response rate. The 1990 Census produced a mail response rate of 65 percent, 10 points below the 1980 rate. Moreover, the response rate of particular segments of the population fell in 1990.

Involving a private firm in a paid advertising campaign was an idea that surfaced in 1991 from Census Bureau evaluations and steadily gained support. Former Census Bureau director Barbara Everitt Bryant endorsed it in a 1997 press release:

“The time for dependence on pro bono creative work and Public Service Announcements for air time was past by 1990. The Census Bureau depended on these for one census too many.”

Y&R conducted comprehensive research to fashion a strategy for the campaign. The firm tested response to four themes: participation is required by law; the survey is confidential; survey completion is a civic duty; and benefits—increased public expenditure on schools, hospitals, and roads—accrue to those who complete the survey. Not surprisingly, the most successful was the last theme, about accruing benefits.

Some tailoring of the message to target populations is in order, however, according to Jennifer Marks, assistant division chief of the Census 2000 Publicity Office. Certain populations, among whom census-type information is closely guarded, will be approached with a combination of themes. Hispanics, in particular, need reassurance that the survey is confidential, Marks noted.

Further, the benefit strategy should not be exaggerated: “You can’t overpromise,” she said. “Not everyone will get a school.”

The dress rehearsal for Census 2000, held in April 1998, led Marks and others to believe that the real census will be a success. Focus group reaction to the slogan was positive. And Paulette Lichtman-Panzer, of the Census Bureau’s Decennial Management Division, reported the following mail response rates for the three sites:

53.7 percent in Sacramento, Calif., where 50.0 percent had been expected; 54.1 percent in Columbia, S.C., where 55.0 percent had been expected; and 40.6 percent from the Menominee American Indian Reservation in Menominee, Wis., where 40.0 percent had been expected.

Although the rate of return achieved was much lower than what the bureau hopes to achieve in 2000, the results indicate that the response was better than expected, Lichtman-Panzer said.

The Census Bureau plans to spend \$100 million on the advertising campaign. Of that amount, according to Marks, \$70 million will go toward media time, and the remainder will cover research, the development and production of ads, media planning, and labor. Although the overall price tag is higher than in 1990, she justified the expense: “Every 1 percent drop in the mail response rate costs the bureau \$25 million in follow-up by enumerators.”

Review of the Dress Rehearsal

Dress rehearsals are not expected to produce the same response as a true census, according to Paulette Lichtman-Panzer of the Census Bureau’s Decennial Management Division. They cannot match the countrywide publicity that is “everywhere you look” during the real thing. The three sites for the 1988 dress rehearsal, for instance, had mail response rates of 49.3, 57.0, and 55.6—all higher than those for 1998. But these rates do track, said Lichtman-Panzer, with higher expected rates for the 1988 dress rehearsal and census.

Census in the Schools

Another outreach effort, the Census in the Schools Project, will enlist students in raising their parents' awareness of the importance of the census. The project will make educational materials about the census available to teachers of students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The materials will draw on census facts and data to teach concepts mandated by national standards of learn-

classroom magazines, and articles in Scholastic classroom magazines.

Through Scholastic, the bureau also will refine its dissemination efforts. "All educators will be able to access the materials on the Internet," Crews explained. The company also will send invitations to teachers in target schools—20 percent of the nation's schools in hard-to-enumerate areas—to order printed copies of the

By next year, there will be 54 million school-age children, 7 million more than in 1990.

ing for all elementary school subjects and for secondary school math and social studies curricula. Scholastic Inc., an educational publishing company, will conduct the project.

Kimberly Crews, chief of the Promotions Branch of the Census 2000 Publicity Office, said the choice of Scholastic solves problems associated with past Census Bureau efforts in the schools. In the 1990 campaign, the Census Bureau sent a kit containing educational materials to all elementary and secondary school principals—but later discovered that principals did not always pass the materials on to teachers.

A Census Bureau press release detailed the new approach for attracting teachers' and students' attention. Scholastic will promote the census in its online network, editorials, announcements in teacher editions of

materials. A limited supply of materials will be available to teachers in schools not in the target areas.

Budget considerations likely will limit what will happen after the invitations or materials are disseminated, Crews noted. "The bureau has no money for training," she said, but she also pointed out that the materials are easy to use. And many kits containing materials will be distributed as early as this spring, when school districts and interested community groups can begin offering their own training.

Two ready measures for gauging the effectiveness of the project will be the number of teachers requesting materials and the number of teachers using the materials, Crews said. Beyond these, Crews and others will have to depend on the evaluation of the overall census for feedback. The evaluation will ask where people learned about the census and what factors influenced them to complete it. Yet, said Crews, "respondents may



This is the official logo for Census in the Schools.

not know themselves which form of outreach was the deciding factor or whether kids made the difference."

School children, on whom the success of the project depends, constitute a large segment of the U.S. population and are often influential within their families, according to the Census Bureau. By next year, there will be 54 million school-age children, 7 million more than in 1990. Nearly half of all families will have children under 18. And in the growing number of minority households where adults do not speak English, school-age children serve as translators. ■

For more information:

Further information on Census 2000 is available online through the bureau's Web site: <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/2khome.htm>.

POPULATION UPDATE

Estimated United States Population:

As of November 1, 1998 271,188,000
 As of November 1, 1997 268,851,000

Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, monthly estimates of the U.S. population. Totals include armed forces overseas.

Estimated World Population:

As of January 1999 5,968,000,000
 Annual growth 84,000,000

Extrapolated from the mid-1998 population on PRB's 1998 World Population Data Sheet.

Latest Provisional Statistics for the U.S.: August 1998

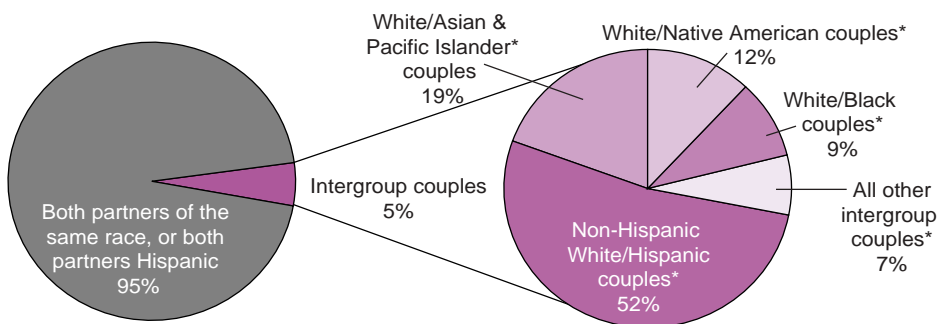
	12 months ending with August			
	Number		Rate	
	1998	1997	1998	1997
Live births	3,936,000	3,879,000	14.6	14.5
Fertility rate	—	—	65.9	65.1
Deaths	2,345,000	2,304,000	8.7	8.6
Infant deaths	27,700	27,300	7.0	7.1
Natural increase	1,591,000	1,575,000	5.9	5.9
Marriages	2,220,000	2,412,000	8.2	9.0
Divorces	1,024,000	1,153,000	3.8	4.3

Note: Fertility rate is given per 1,000 women ages 15-44; infant deaths per 1,000 live births; other rates per 1,000 population.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 47, no. 14 (1998).

SPEAKING GRAPHICALLY

Intergroup Married Couples: 1998



Note: The "white," "black," "Asian & Pacific Islander," and "Native American" categories do not include Hispanics.

*Percentages represent the percentages of all intergroup couples.

Source: PRB analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (March supplement), 1998.

The number of married couples who are of different racial/ethnic groups (white, black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American) has nearly doubled, from 1.5 million in 1980 (3 percent of the total) to 2.9 million in 1998 (5 percent). Slightly more than half (52 percent) of intergroup couples in 1998 were made up of non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics, followed by those made up of non-Hispanic whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders. White/black couples, by contrast, constituted less than one-tenth of intergroup couples. These figures reflect the degree of "social distance" between the various groups in American society.

Population Today is published 11 times a year by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB). Founded in 1929, PRB is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the dissemination of objective demographic information. The views and opinions of *Population Today's* contributors do not necessarily reflect those of PRB.

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 ISSN 0749-2448

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* Educators, students, and seniors should send supporting documentation.



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Azerbaijan



Population mid-1998: 7.7 million
Land area: 33,436 sq. miles
Births: 17 per 1,000 population
Deaths: 6 per 1,000 population
Infant deaths: 19 per 1,000 live births
Natural increase: 1.1 percent per year
Total fertility: 2.1 births per woman
Life expectancy: 67 (male)/74 (female)
Capital: Baku

Azerbaijan, a country slightly smaller than Maine, lies on the southeastern portion of the Caucasus Mountains, abutted by the Caspian Sea. An oil-producing country, Azerbaijan also lies at the center of controversy over where to build pipelines that will transport Caspian Sea oil to world markets.

In addition to oil exploration and production, agriculture and mining contribute to the country's economy. Agriculture represents one-quarter of the gross domestic product and employs 31 percent of the work force, but slow privatization and diversification—from wheat and cotton to fruits and vegetables—hinder productivity. The region is rich in minerals such as iron, bauxite, and cobalt.

Despite its oil wealth and strong agricultural and mining sectors, Azerbaijan struggles to correct a dismal environmental record and to support a large refugee population.

The Apsheron Peninsula (where Baku is situated) and the Caspian Sea are considered by some scientists to be some of the world's most ecologically devastated places because of severe air, water, and soil pollution. Soil pollution resulted from widespread use of DDT in the 1970s and 1980s and highly toxic defoliants that were used in cotton production. Thirty percent of agricultural land suffers from salinization. Other pollutants have included petroleum products and heavy metals such as copper, zinc, and cadmium.

Azerbaijan's air pollution stems from petrochemical plants, refineries, exhaust fumes, and the burning of untreated garbage. Water pollution is the result of oil spills, leaky pipelines and tanks, runoff from fertilizers and pesticides, and improperly treated sewage. Land pollution derives from inadequate waste management. There is a high incidence of waterborne diseases, including cholera, caused by inadequate treatment of drinking water and sewage intrusion into leaky distribution pipes. Overfishing, damming, and pollution have decreased the sturgeon catch. The rising level of the Caspian Sea has led to loss of crops and topsoil, as well as flooding of disposal sites and oil fields. These developments have in turn increased pollution.

Environmental hazards affect the people of Azerbaijan. More than 90 percent of infants under age 1 are immunized against tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, and measles. Still, Azerbaijani babies are three times more likely to die before they reach their first birthday than are U.S. infants. This difference in mortality between the two countries is even greater for children a few years older. Azerbaijani children

are five times more likely to die before age 5 than are U.S. children.

Living conditions are especially harsh for the country's refugee population—250,000 refugees and half a million people displaced by a territorial conflict with Armenia over its Nagorno-Karabakh region. Refugees constitute 12 percent of the overall population.

The vast proportion of U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan has been for emergency humanitarian programs for refugees and displaced persons. These programs have been administered largely by private voluntary organizations and by international organizations such as the United Nations. Most programs involve distribution of food, clothing, and medicines; provision of basic medical services; and construction of shelters and water supply and sanitation systems. ■

Adapted from: PRB's US in the World project, which produces educational materials designed to explore environmental problems that link people worldwide. Implemented in collaboration with the Population and Habitat Campaign of the National Audubon Society and the Population Coalition of local Leagues of Women Voters, the project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

For more information on US in the World, contact Roger-Mark DeSouza at PRB, 202/939-5430; e-mail: rdesouza@prb.org. Or visit PRB's Web site at <http://www.prb.org>.

Other sources consulted include a World Bank country profile (<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/az2.htm>) and the U.S. Department of Commerce Caucasus Country Report "Mixed Year for Azerbaijani Agriculture," Oct. 26, 1998 (<http://www.itaiep.doc.gov/bisnis/country/981027az.htm>).

NEWS AND RESOURCES

New US in the World Factsheets

Seven new state-country *US in the World* factsheets are available from PRB. Each profiles the population-environment trends in a state and in a developing country. The new factsheets pair Georgia with Senegal; Hawaii with Madagascar; Indiana with Azerbaijan; Michigan with Malawi; New Mexico with Pakistan; Tennessee with Honduras; and Washington, D.C., with Comoros.

Sets of all 31 state-country factsheets produced to date, an overview, and the 1998 *United States Population Data Sheet* are available for \$12 each, but quantities are limited. Contact PRB's Customer Service Department at 800/877-9881; e-mail: popref@prb.org. Or access the factsheets online at <http://www.prb.org/news/usworld.htm>.

Fewer facilities offering abortions

The number of abortion providers has dropped by one-third since 1982, according to "Abortion Incidence and Services in the United States, 1995-1996," a new report by The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI).

AGI's report says most facilities discontinuing abortion services are physicians'

practices and hospitals, particularly in rural areas.

Between 1990 and 1996, the number of providers dropped in all states except New Jersey, Utah, and the District of Columbia, which experienced increases, and New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota, where there was no change.

For more information, contact Susan Tew, AGI, phone: 212/248-1111, x2208; e-mail: info@agi-usa.org; Web site: <http://www.agi-usa.org>.

Number of single fathers increasing

The number of single fathers in the United States has increased 25 percent—from 1.7 million in 1995 to 2.1 million in 1998, according to data recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The number of single mothers has remained constant at 9.8 million during the same period.

Fathers made up 18 percent of single parents in 1998, up from 10 percent in 1970, according to *Household and Family Characteristics: March 1998*.

For more information, contact Lynne Casper, Census Bureau, phone: 301/457-2416. The report is available online at [### **Upcoming PRB Policy Seminar**](http://www.census.gov/popula-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

PRB hosts monthly noontime seminars on demographic trends and policy issues at our Washington, D.C., office.

On Wednesday, Feb. 24, Roger-Mark DeSouza, PRB's population and environment coordinator, will discuss the *US in the World* project. The project produces educational materials that explore environmental problems linking people worldwide. The project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

The PRB policy seminars are free and open to the public. To receive regular notices of upcoming seminars, contact PRB at 202/483-1100; fax: 202/328-3937; e-mail: popref@prb.org. Or visit PRB's Web site at <http://www.prb.org>.

<http://www.socdemo/hh-fam.html>.

Fewer teens having second babies

The number of teens giving birth to second babies has dropped sharply, according to recently released National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data.

The rate of second births to teens declined 21 percent between 1991 and 1996; first births to teenagers declined 6 percent during the same period.

Declines in Teenage Birth Rates: National and State Patterns, 1991-97, shows that, out of 500,000 births to teenagers in 1997, 90,000 were second births. The overall teen birth rate dropped 15 percent between 1991 and 1997.

The report can be accessed online at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/releases/98news/98news/teenpreg.htm>. For more information, call the NCHS press office at 301/436-7551; e-mail: paoquery@cdc.gov.

New Books

Health and Welfare for Families in the 21st Century. Helen M. Wallace, Gordon Green, Kenneth J. Jaros, Lisa L. Paine, and Mary Story, eds. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers. 616 pages. 1999. \$39.50.

The California Cauldron: Immigration and the Fortunes of Local Communities. William A.V. Clark. New York: The Guilford Press. 224 pages. 1998. \$27.95.

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