

# CDC: US abortion rate falls to lowest level in decades

November 23 2016, by David Crary

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In this Jan. 23, 2011 file photo, a statue representing women's empowerment stands in front of a Planned Parenthood facility in Tucson, Ariz. The number and rate of abortions tallied by federal authorities have fallen to their lowest level in decades, according to new data released Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2016. (AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin, File)

The number and rate of abortions tallied by federal authorities have fallen to their lowest level in decades, according to new data released

Wednesday.

The latest annual report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, incorporating data from 47 states, said the abortion rate for 2013 was 12.5 abortions per 1,000 [women](#) aged 15-44 years. That is down 5 percent from 2012, and is half the rate of 25 recorded in 1980.

The last time the CDC recorded a lower abortion rate was in 1971, two years before the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision that established a nationwide right for women to have abortions. Abortion was legal in some states at that time.

The CDC tallied 664,435 abortions in 2013 from the 47 states, down 5 percent from 2012 and down 20 percent from 2004. The CDC does not receive abortion data from California, Maryland and New Hampshire—and thus its total is less than the widely accepted current estimate of more than 900,000 abortions per year in all 50 states.

Back in 1990, when California was supplying data, the CDC recorded a peak of more than 1.4 million abortions.

The CDC's latest findings meshed with an Associated Press state-by-state survey conducted last year—with extensive data from 2014—showing that abortions had been declining in virtually every state since 2010. There were big declines in conservative states passing laws to restrict abortions and also in more liberal states that protected abortion rights.

The CDC report suggests there are several factors behind the abortion decline, including a sharp drop in adolescent pregnancies, expanded coverage of contraception costs by health care plans, and increased use of effective, long-lasting contraceptive methods such as intrauterine devices and hormonal implants.

Among the CDC's detailed findings:

—Women in their 20s accounted for more than 58 percent of abortions and had the highest abortion rates. Young women and girls aged 19 and under accounted for 11.7 percent of abortions.

—Two-thirds of abortions were performed within the first eight weeks of gestation, and nearly 92 percent by 13 weeks. Only 1.3 percent were performed after 20 weeks—a point at which many anti-abortion activists want a federal abortion ban to be imposed. President-elect Donald Trump has promised to support such a ban if legislation reaches his desk.

—State [abortion rates](#) varied widely, from 3.6 per 1,000 women age 15-44 in Mississippi to 24.3 in New York. Mississippi is among a handful of [states](#) with only one functioning abortion clinic.

—Medical abortions—generally using the drugs mifepristone and misoprostol—accounted for about 22 percent of abortions; surgical procedures accounted for nearly all the others.

—About 15 percent of women who obtained an [abortion](#) were married. About 60 percent had previously given birth to at least one child.

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