

Statement by HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson
Regarding the America's Children Report
Thursday, 19 July 2001

It's a good time to be a child in America. The federal Government's fifth annual report, America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well Being, 2001 brings encouraging news for children in several areas. Childhood poverty is decreasing, children are more likely to have at least one parent working, adolescent births are at an all time low, children are more likely to have health insurance, the adolescent death rate is declining, and 10th and 12th graders are less likely to smoke.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is working hard to provide a bright future for the health of America's children. To bolster the downward trend in the teen pregnancy rate, HHS has made more than \$17.1 million in new grants available to help 49 communities develop and implement abstinence-only education programs for young people age 12 to 18. Moreover, new HHS regulations increase individual states' flexibility to provide health insurance coverage to children under the State Children's Health Insurance Program. By encouraging states to adapt the program to the needs of their own children and families, this program will make it possible for even more children to be covered by health insurance.

The America's Children report is a concerted effort by all federal agencies that compile statistics on children to make their information available to the public and to policymakers in a single, comprehensive, yet concise account. This statistical snapshot provides valuable information that those in federal service or private sector can use to continue to improve the status of the nation's most precious asset, its children.

A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.childstats.gov>
Contact: HHS Press Office at 202.690.6343