

## LIVE BIRTHS AND DELIVERY TYPE

In 2010, there were 4 million live births in the United States and the birth rate among women aged 15–44 years was 64.1 births per 1,000, a decrease of 3 percent from 2009 and the lowest rate reported in over a decade.<sup>60</sup> Overall birth rates were highest among mothers aged 25–29 years (108.3 live births per 1,000 women), followed by those aged 30–34 years (96.5 births per 1,000 women). Between 2009 and 2010, the birth rate declined or remained unchanged in every age group except for 40–44 years, which increased 2 percent to the highest level since 1967.<sup>60,61</sup> The birth rates among

teens aged 15–19 years and young women aged 20–24 years declined to the lowest levels ever reported (34.2 and 90.0 per 1,000, respectively). Only birth rates among women aged 30 years and older are higher now than in 1990.

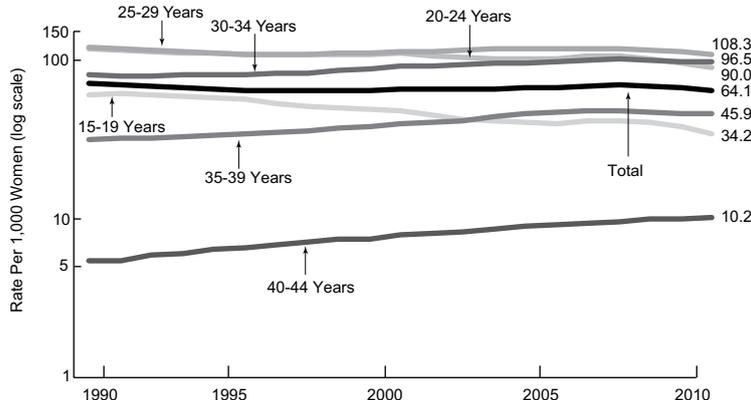
The average age at first birth increased to 25.4 in 2010, an increase of 4 years since 1970.<sup>61,62</sup> Asian/Pacific Islander women had the highest average age at first birth while American Indian/Alaska Native women had the lowest (29.1 and 22.3 years, respectively; data not shown).<sup>60</sup>

The proportion of births delivered by cesarean section declined slightly from 32.9 percent in 2009 to 32.8 percent in 2010. This represents

the first decline in cesarean delivery since 1996, when 20.7 percent of births were delivered by cesarean section. The U.S. cesarean delivery rate far exceeds the upper limit of 15 percent recommended by the World Health Organization.<sup>63</sup> *Healthy People 2020* has set national objectives to reduce the cesarean delivery rate by 10 percent among low-risk women giving birth for the first time and among low-risk women with a prior cesarean section.<sup>54</sup> In 2010, 27.3 percent of low-risk women giving birth for the first time and 89.9 percent of low-risk women with a prior cesarean section delivered by cesarean (data not shown).<sup>64</sup>

### Live Births per 1,000 Women, by Age, 1990–2010

Source II.23: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System



### Births by Cesarean Delivery, 1990–2010

Source II.23: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System

