

# **COUPLE INTENTIONS FOR PREGNANCY: EFFECTS ON PRENATAL CARE AND BIRTH OUTCOMES**

**Bryndl Hohmann-Marriott**

Population Research Institute  
Pennsylvania State University

bryndl@pop.psu.edu

Poster presented at the 2008 meeting of the Population Association of America  
New Orleans, April 17-19

## **ABSTRACT**

The couple context of unintended pregnancies and newborn health is gaining importance with the increase in births to unmarried couples. In particular, a disproportionate number of births to unmarried couples were not intended. This study uses the first wave of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) to investigate the association of early prenatal care, preterm birth, and low birth weight with the couple relationship context, in particular the partners' conjoint intentions for the pregnancy, their marital status at conception, and the presence of relationship problems during the pregnancy. Couples are at increased risk of inadequate prenatal care and preterm birth when they do not share intentions or when neither partner intended the pregnancy. Couples are at additional risk of inadequate prenatal care when the pregnancy was conceived nonmaritally and when the mother did not tell the father about the pregnancy, particularly when neither partner intended the pregnancy. The risk of premature birth is particularly high when the partners are both unmarried and either or both did not intend the pregnancy.