



B.C. teen moms to get \$23M boost

By Kris Sims, Parliamentary Bureau

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Low-income teen moms in British Columbia will soon benefit from \$23 million in provincial funding for in-home nurse visits.

"Healthy Start provides them with support, resources and guidance throughout their pregnancies, as they welcome their first baby into their homes, and right through to their child's second birthday," said B.C. Health Minister Michael de Jong.

This comes as a trio of pregnant teens from the Fraser Valley shared their story with QMI Agency.

The soon-to-mothers, all fans of the popular MTV reality show Teen Mom, will not benefit from the provincial funding as the program starts too late.

One of the pregnant girls, 15-year-old "Samantha," due this month, said she "wishes all young people would take pregnancy and marriage more seriously."

Her boyfriend, 17, attended the baby shower and the couple hope to marry in the future. "That's a very good and brave thing for a guy to do but that's not the most stressful part, the most stressful part will be when the baby is actually here."

"Marie," 17, is expecting in December, she's single, and she splits her time between her dad's house and her grandmother's.

"I really wanted to be married before having a baby, but it looks like I'll be a single mother through this, but I have tons of support with family," she said.

Marie said she's counting her blessings because her 18-year-old friend was kicked-out when she became pregnant -- she's sleeping on friends' couches and has no phone.

Marie has watched the Teen Mom show for three years, and wants to name her son Bentley after one of the babies in the program.

She said it's tough these days to be a young mother.

"Sometimes I wish it was 100 years earlier so I could be married before having a baby. It's harder to do that now because most men nowadays don't want anything to do with marriage or a baby."

While the rate of teen motherhood is stable in Canada, analysts say the protection of marriage for those young women has evaporated.

"What a sad statement on our culture today that these girls are valiantly raising children on their own, without any expectation that the man would be present or marry them," said Andrea Mrozek, spokeswoman for the Institute of Marriage and Family.

"We need to get the horse before the cart again."

*All of the teen parents' names have been changed as they do not want to be identified.