Promoting folic acid: A successful outreach model

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Breakout 2
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Background

- Daily use of folic acid before and during pregnancy may reduce rates of neural tube defects (NTD's) by up to 70%.
- 1998 IOM Report recommends all women capable of becoming pregnant consume 400 mcg of folic acid daily from supplements and/or fortified foods in addition to a diet rich in folate.
- Western NC’s NTD rate in the 1990’s was more than twice the national rate.
Results of efforts

• Comparing pre- and post-fortification rates: National NTD rates down 27%
• NC 1995/96 vs. 2004/05 – rates down 42%
• Western NC NTD rates have decreased more than 70%
• Vitamin use among recipients of free vitamins increased from 25% pre-intervention to 62% post-intervention
Prevalence of Total Neural Tube Defects
North Carolina and Western Perinatal Region, 1995-2005*
N.C. Birth Defects Monitoring Program

*2004-2005 data are provisional
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach methods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health care professional education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Free multivitamins to regional public health departments to distribute to low income, non-pregnant women of childbearing age</td>
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Community education

• Community Ambassador Program
• Regional
• Grass-roots health promotion program
• Community groups or individuals
• Individuals are trained, provided teaching materials and paid a stipend to make presentations and distribute materials
Community Ambassador

• Motivated individuals
• Peers, high school or college students, employees at a company, members of churches, neighborhood moms, hair stylists
• Individuals that represent the diversity of the community
Health care professional education

• OB/GYN, FP and Pediatric groups
• 15-20 minute in-office presentation
• Patient materials and reminder items
• Office Champion volunteer
Women’s Wellness Rx

Name __________________ Date __________
Next pap smear due __________ BP __________
Next mammogram due ______________________
☐ Examine your breasts every month
☐ Move more every day
☐ Eat more fruits and veggies
☐ Apply sunscreen daily
☐ Take 1200 mg calcium daily, or other __________
☐ Take a MULTIVITAMIN with 400 mcg of folic acid every day

Signature __________________________

1-800-367-2229
Vitamin distribution

• 24 county public health departments receive health care professional education and patient materials
• Staff are trained regarding FA counseling and program protocol
• Multivitamins provided for free distribution during one-on-one education interaction
• College health centers buy MV’s to give to female students
Community education

- Message bundling- More, less or equally effective?
- Karen King, PhD at University of Georgia-CDC preconception health message bundling research study: presented 10/2007 Preconception Summit
- 3 groupings of messages: medical management, screening and testing, lifestyle change
Bundling

- Folic acid could have been fourth category but ended up in Lifestyle
- Less than 60% of women had recall with one message
- Similar recall with 3 messages - no grouping or 4 messages with grouping
Health care professional education

• Message bundling- More, less or equally effective?
• Results of ACOG survey of 665 members: 87% define preconception care (PCC):
  • “As specialized pre-pregnancy care that focuses on issues not typically addressed during a routine exam which are specific to ensuring an optimal pregnancy outcome.”
• Yet, 35% state their patients do not plan pregnancies and 49% said “none/few” of their patients come in before pregnant for PCC
Vitamin distribution

- Tool to jumpstart behavior change
- Involve local health care entities
- Healthy weight- Weight loss program memberships; gym memberships
Summary

• Synergistic outreach methods for successful regional Folic Acid Campaign
• 3 methods: Community education, Healthcare provider education and Vitamin distribution
• Same methods could be used for other preconception messages and bundled messages