

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH**

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Listed below are activities that may be used to promote Birth Defects Prevention Month. In addition to providing pamphlets and other educational resources to local health departments and community-based organizations, states can:

- Partner with local, state or other Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention, advocacy and support groups to mobilize efforts aimed at legislators and other policy makers; or to conduct community education activities.
- Seek out health educators and school nurses at middle and high schools to provide FAS materials to distribute to staff members, students and students' families.
- Contact the Communications lead for your own agency and ask about having Birth Defects Prevention Month and the availability of the packet materials announced by the head of your agency in your monthly newsletter, in an "ALL" email, or as a stuffer in payroll envelopes.
- Contact community and local colleges and universities to provide materials for their health center waiting rooms. Materials about alcohol consumption and about folic acid are especially relevant.
- Enlist the support of the March of Dimes, Spina Bifida Association, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, or Planned Parenthood to mobilize their constituents to distribute materials and send letters to legislators.
- Seek support from statewide or local businesses. Companies may: add information about birth defects to their corporate or wellness newsletters; sponsor events such as baby fairs; or donate door prizes such as, 'folic acid rich' food baskets for wellness, bridal or other community events.
- Provide pamphlets or fact sheets to managed care plans to educate their patients and providers.
- Distribute materials to the state's Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program, MCH programs including Reproductive Health and Family Planning, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and Medicaid.
- Collaborate with hospitals or clinics on community outreach projects. Topics may include preparing for pregnancy or prevention strategies to reduce the risk of birth defects.
- Distribute educational materials to reproductive genetics clinics that offer genetic counseling services to women prior to conception and in early pregnancy.
- Share prevention materials with pediatric and family medicine practices as well as OB/GYN providers.
- Connect with partners in the media who are committed to MCH issues. Prepare PSA scripts and write educational articles that may be used and adapted by local media. Recruit a birth defects prevention 'champion' for media interviews.