

## Birth Defects Prevention Month Montana Sample Activities

### **Examples from Big Sky Country**

Montana is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest geographic state (145,552 sq. miles) in the Union. Population is 902,195 with approximately 11,000 births per year. The following list of activities covered our entire state and would not have been possible without collaborative partnerships with the March of Dimes, Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the Montana Medical Genetics Program. Please contact Denise Higgins at (406) 444-1216 for information regarding any of the following activities.

### **January Media Campaign**

Run date: January 1 – January 31, 2001

Budget: \$25,000

Target population: All women of child-bearing age

With donated material from the March of Dimes, 20 “Get the B Attitude” billboards were produced in conjunction with the MOD “Stork” PSA on 4 major television networks including 3 cable networks in 7 major media markets. National Public Radio and newspaper interviews by the March of Dimes and the State program coordinator and a statewide news release enhanced this awareness campaign.

### **September Folic Acid Awareness Campaign**

Run date: August 30 – September 30, 2001

Budget: \$3000 + \$2000 March of Dimes Community Grant

Target population: All women of child-bearing age

This educational campaign, partnered with the March of Dimes, sought participation with the Governor’s office and 350 grocery and pharmaceutical retailers around the State. This campaign utilized television, radio and newspaper media markets to promote September as “Folic Acid Month”. Gov. Judy Martz appeared in the television PSA and supplied a letter of appreciation to all participating retailers. March of Dimes supplied brochures, brochure holders and fact sheets for distribution to the participating stores and pharmacies. Placards and shelf liners displaying “Contains Folic Acid” were distributed to all stores to highlight vitamins and supplements in their health sections containing folic acid. Audio from the television PSA was burned on to compact discs and distributed to 35 radio stations. A newspaper ad was developed from the PSA and distributed to the 7 major newspapers in Montana with a news release. We kicked off the campaign with a press conference at a participating grocery store, attended by Gov. Judy Martz, the director of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, the director of Program Services for the March of Dimes and the Montana birth defects program coordinator. To promote the campaign amongst the state health department employees, we held a “folic acid” food drive for folic acid-rich foods during September for a local food bank.

### **Related on-going activities:**

- ◆ Distributed “Folic Acid Toothbrushes” (sponsored by Butler/Gum Co. and the March of Dimes) to county WIC offices and at professional conferences.
- ◆ Sponsored “Folic Acid Awareness Days” at 5 state universities utilizing the “Ready or Not” campaign from CDC. Ran radio PSAs hung posters and held a raffle of “college” prizes for students who approached the display for information.