

## Appendix 2: Materials Adapted for Local Public Health Department

This appendix contains some of the materials from the 2017 National Birth Defects Prevention Month packet that have been adapted for use in raising birth defects awareness with local public health agencies. These materials supplement a more comprehensive packet that includes a sample news release, proclamation, provider letters, resources on the internet, and parent resources.

### Local public health resource packet includes examples of:

- LPH1: Local public health announcement
- LPH2: Traditional letter to local public health agency administrators
- LPH3: Electronic letter to local public health agency staff
- LPH4: Brief awareness article
- LPH5: Awareness article for public health clinic newsletters
- LPH6: Announcement for electronic newsletters or listservs



## LPH1: Sample local public health announcement

### Plan ahead for January 2017 – Birth Defects Prevention Month!

The theme for 2017 is “Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection”. We encourage you to begin thinking about activities you can do in your agency or community to raise public awareness of the role infection before and during pregnancy plays in the development of birth defects.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) has developed a valuable packet of information. The materials raise awareness among health and public health professionals as well as the general public and include posters, sample communication tools and resource sheets. Some ideas for use of the packet to raise awareness include:

- Put posters up in your agency waiting rooms, even restrooms!
- Provide fact sheets and posters on the importance of using folic acid to prevent certain types of serious birth defects.
- Volunteer to present information on birth defects and birth defects prevention at a “lunch and learn” with your Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Home Visiting Nurses and other agency staff.
- Supply pamphlets or fact sheets for patients and professionals in doctors’ offices and clinics in the community.

Electronic materials will be sent as soon as they are ready. Please contact (*insert contact information*) if you would like more information.



## LPH2: Sample traditional letter to local public health agency administrators

January 2017

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Administrators, County Health Departments  
District Nurse Managers (*Insert Other Recipients*)

FROM: (*Insert Name*)  
(*Department Director*)

About 120,000 babies are affected by birth defects each year in the United States. In (*name of state*), approximately (*insert number*) babies are born with a birth defect each year. Not only can birth defects lead to lifelong challenges and disability, they are also the most common cause of death in infants and the second most common cause of death in children aged one to four years. I have included a State of (*name of state*) Birth Defects Profile (*if appropriate - as well as a Regional Birth Defects Profile*) for your reference.

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month. The theme for 2017 is “Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection”. We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. But, we also know that women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and adopting healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy. Some infections before and during pregnancy can hurt both you and your baby. They can cause birth defects and lifelong disabilities, such as hearing loss or learning problems. You can reduce your risk of getting an infection during pregnancy to help protect your baby by following the subsequent recommendations:

- **Properly prepare food.**
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food.
  - Do not eat raw or runny eggs or raw sprouts.
  - Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk and cheese, and other foods made from them.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do to prevent infections such as Zika virus.
  - Make sure that you are up-to-date with vaccinations (shots) before getting pregnant.
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinations that you should receive during pregnancy.
- **Protect yourself from animals and insects known to carry diseases such as Zika virus.**
  - Stay away from wild or pet rodents, live poultry, lizards and turtles, and do not clean cat litter boxes while pregnant.
  - When mosquitoes and ticks are active, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside.
  - Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (para-menthane-3,8-diol).
- **Maintain good hygiene.**
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially
    - Before preparing or eating foods,
    - After handling raw meat, raw eggs, or unwashed vegetables,
    - After being around or touching pets and other animals,
    - After changing diapers or wiping runny noses.
  - Do not put a young child’s food, utensils, drinking cups, or pacifiers in your mouth.

You can make a difference in the lives of (*name of state*) families. Please review the materials in the attached packet and use them to raise public awareness of birth defects. We invite you to share these resources with coworkers, colleagues, staff, and others who might benefit from this information.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions or would like additional materials, please contact me or (*Insert Name*) by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email (*Insert Email*) or (*Insert Email*).

## LPH3: Sample electronic letter to local public health agency staff

Dear (public health nurses/practitioners/clinic staff/etc.),

The (***name of state health department – hyperlinked to website***) is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to raise awareness of birth defects and to promote strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. The theme for 2017 is “Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection”. We hope that you will join us in promoting National Birth Defects Prevention Month and raising awareness of birth defects as a public health issue in your communities. Governor (name of Governor) has also proclaimed the month of January 2017 as Birth Defects Prevention Month (hyperlink to state proclamation). I invite you to share the attached resources with coworkers, colleagues, local public health staff, and others who might benefit from this information.

Birth defects affect 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States and are a leading cause of infant mortality. Babies who survive and live with birth defects are at an increased risk for developing many lifelong physical, cognitive, and social challenges. Medical care and support services only scrape the surface of the financial and emotional impact of living with birth defects. We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. But, we also know that women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and adopting healthy behaviors before becoming pregnant. Please encourage all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to:

- **Properly prepare food.**
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food.
  - Do not eat raw or runny eggs or raw sprouts.
  - Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk and cheese, and other foods made from them.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do to prevent infections such as Zika virus.
  - Make sure that you are up-to-date with vaccinations (shots) before getting pregnant.
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinations that you should receive during pregnancy.
- **Protect yourself from animals and insects known to carry diseases such as Zika virus.**
  - Stay away from wild or pet rodents, live poultry, lizards and turtles, and do not clean cat litter boxes while pregnant.
  - When mosquitoes and ticks are active, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside.
  - Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (para-menthane-3,8-diol).
- **Maintain good hygiene.**
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially
    - Before preparing or eating foods,
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    - After being around or touching pets and other animals,
    - After changing diapers or wiping runny noses.
  - Do not put a young child’s food, utensils, drinking cups, or pacifiers in your mouth.

The (*name of state – hyperlink to birth defects program website*) Birth Defects Program website contains information, resources, and links to free educational materials from (*name of state health department*), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN). We encourage you to use these materials to raise awareness of the ways birth defects can be prevented among health professionals and the general public in your community. You have the power to make a difference. We urge you to join us as an active participant in *National Birth Defects Prevention Month - 2017* and to continue your efforts throughout the year.



## LPH4: Sample awareness article (brief)

### January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

#### Prevent to Protect – Prevent Infections for Baby's Protection

The (*name of state/local*) Department of Health is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) and the (*name of state*) March of Dimes to raise awareness of birth defects and to promote strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. Join us in promoting National Birth Defects Prevention Month!

Birth defects affect 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States and are a leading cause of infant mortality. Babies who survive and live with birth defects are at an increased risk for developing many lifelong physical, cognitive, and social challenges.

Although not all birth defects can be prevented, all women who could become pregnant or are pregnant can lower their risk of having babies with birth defects by following some basic health guidelines throughout their reproductive years. These include:

- **Properly prepare food.**
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food.
  - Do not eat raw or runny eggs or raw sprouts.
  - Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk and cheese, and other foods made from them.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do to prevent infections such as Zika virus.
  - Make sure that you are up-to-date with vaccinations (shots) before getting pregnant.
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinations that you should receive during pregnancy.
- **Protect yourself from animals and insects known to carry diseases such as Zika virus.**
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    - After handling raw meat, raw eggs, or unwashed vegetables,
    - After being around or touching pets and other animals,
    - After changing diapers or wiping runny noses.
  - Do not put a young child's food, utensils, drinking cups, or pacifiers in your mouth.

January is a perfect time to call additional attention to the importance of folic acid in preventing certain birth defects. The United States Public Health Service recommends that all women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (400mcg or .4mg) of folic acid daily to prevent up to 50 - 70% of neural tube defects, such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

The (*name of state Birth Defects Program*) has resource materials available on their website to assist you in raising awareness of birth defects as a public health issue in your clinic and communities. Materials include the NBDPN resource packet that can be tailored to meet your specific needs, sample partner and provider letters, a proclamation of the month, as well as links to resources for parents and other interested in learning more about birth defects.

For more information, contact (*insert name and email*)

## LPH5: Sample awareness article for public health clinic newsletters

### January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

The (*name of state*) Department of Health is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to raise awareness of birth defects and to promote strategies that can reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. This year's theme is "Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby's Protection". Although not all birth defects can be prevented, the healthcare community can help all women, including teens, who could become pregnant or are pregnant to lower their risk of having babies with birth defects by encouraging them to follow some basic health guidelines throughout their reproductive years:

- **Properly prepare food.**
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food.
  - Do not eat raw or runny eggs or raw sprouts.
  - Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk and cheese, and other foods made from them.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about what you can do to prevent infections such as Zika virus.
  - Make sure that you are up-to-date with vaccinations (shots) before getting pregnant.
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinations that you should receive during pregnancy.
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  - Stay away from wild or pet rodents, live poultry, lizards and turtles, and do not clean cat litter boxes while pregnant.
  - When mosquitoes and ticks are active, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside.
  - Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (para-menthane-3,8-diol).
- **Maintain good hygiene.**
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially
    - Before preparing or eating foods,
    - After handling raw meat, raw eggs, or unwashed vegetables,
    - After being around or touching pets and other animals,
    - After changing diapers or wiping runny noses.
  - Do not put a young child's food, utensils, drinking cups, or pacifiers in your mouth.

January is a perfect time to call additional attention to the importance of folic acid in preventing certain birth defects. The United States Public Health Service recommends that all women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (400mcg or .4mg) of folic acid daily to prevent up to 50 - 70% of neural tube defects, such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

You can make a difference in the lives of (*name of state*) families. Additional resources can be found on the NBDPN website. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact (*name and email*).

## LPH6: Sample announcement for electronic newsletters or listservs

### January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month and January 8-14 is Folic Acid Awareness Week

The (*name of state*) Department of Health is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to raise awareness of birth defects and to promote strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. We hope that you will join us in promoting National Birth Defects Prevention Month! This year's theme is "Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby's Protection". We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. However, we encourage all women to make healthy choices and adopt healthy habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect. Please encourage all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to follow the recommended guidelines to reduce their chance of developing an infection before or during their pregnancy.

The (*name of state and birth defects program - hyperlink to birth defects program website*) has resource materials available on their website to assist you in raising awareness of birth defects as a public health issue in your clinic and communities. Materials include the NBDPN resource packet and (*name of state*) resource packet that can be tailored to meet your specific needs. These materials contain sample partner and provider letters, a proclamation of the month, as well as links to resources for parents and other interested in learning more about birth defects and infections during pregnancy. Free educational materials are also available on the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/freematerials.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/freematerials.html).

Folic Acid Awareness Week, January 8-14, is a perfect time to call additional attention to the importance of folic acid in preventing certain birth defects. The United States Public Health Service recommends that *all* women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (400mcg or .4mg) of folic acid daily to prevent up to 50 - 70% of neural tube defects, such as spina bifida and anencephaly. To learn more about Folic Acid Awareness Week go to <http://www.nbdpn.org/faaw.php>.

For more information, contact (*name and email*).

**To access our resources online visit: [www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org)**