

MCFH Coalition ENewsletter



Maternal, Child & Family Health Coalition

www.stl-mcfhc.org

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National Birth Defects Prevention Month

According to the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), eighteen babies die every day as a result of birth defects and one out of every 33 babies born are born with birth defects. While the causes of most birth defects are still unknown, it is known that some defects are caused due to toxin exposure (drugs, medicines, chemicals) and some are caused as a result of genetic factors. The NBDPN advocates for additional research to be done to discover other causes of these debilitating and life-threatening conditions.

A number of strategies have supported the reduction of birth defects. Better treatments for control of seizures and diabetes during pregnancy, completion of immunization schedule prior to pregnancy, intake of folic acid by the pregnant mother and genetic counseling are all strategies that have supported the reduction of birth defects.

The NBDPN provides resources and information to assist your efforts in preventing birth defects. www.nbdpn.org

Hot Topic: Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Missouri HPV Education Coalition offers the following information by Kerri McBee-Black in recognition of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. This article is written for families. You are invited to reproduce it for your constituents or newsletters. If you choose to do so, please let Jill (314-289-5685) know so we can track its usage.

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

Nearly 11,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. But you *can* prevent cervical cancer! Here are some ideas for how you can protect yourself and your family during Cervical Health Awareness Month:

Get regular Pap tests. These tests are used to detect the presence of abnormal cells that can lead to cervical cancer. In addition to the Pap, your health care provider may also give you an HPV test if you are over age 30 or if you have a borderline abnormal Pap test. You can take the pledge to prevent cervical cancer and get a personal reminder to schedule an annual exam at www.cervicalcancercampaign.org

Get the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. HPV is the virus that is the leading cause of cervical cancer. The CDC recommends routine HPV vaccination for 11-12 year-old girls and also for 13-26 year-old girls/women who have not yet received the vaccine. A second HPV vaccine, which may be used to protect women older than 26, could receive FDA approval in early 2008. Since these vaccines will not prevent all types of HPV infections that could lead to cancer, it is still important to get regular Pap tests even if you have been vaccinated. Learn more about the HPV vaccine at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/hpv-vaccine.pdf>.

Get the word out to your family, friends and colleagues. In 2007, at least 17 states enacted bills related to HPV vaccination (usually to fund vaccinations for un- and underinsured adults or educate the public). Most other states at least introduced bills. In Missouri, a large private investment is funding vaccination for all 9-26 year old females in the state who are unable to afford it. The Alliance for the Status of Missouri Women is the lead organization in the statewide coalition to educate the public about HPV. The Missouri HPV Education Coalition (MOHEC) is helping to spread the word, visit our website at www.mohpv.org for more information or for help in getting the word out in your state, contact Kerri McBee-Black with the Alliance at mohpv@yahoo.com or visit our website to find out more about how you can improve the status of women in Missouri www.mowomensalliance.org.

The Maternal, Child and Family Health Coalition participates in the HPV Education Coalition.

Other Important National Awareness Campaigns for February

The National Children's Dental Health and International Prenatal Infection Prevention are the focus of campaigns in February. Dental health for children is focused on helping children develop good habits early and encourages regular dental visits. Sponsored by the American Dental Association (ADA), the campaign also includes "Give Kids a Smile" which attempts to give low-income children access to dental care. The ADA has downloadable materials on its web site at <http://www.ada.org/prof/events/featured/ncdhm.asp>.

The International Prenatal Infection Prevention efforts are focused on preventing Group B streptococcus infections. The Group B strain (GBS) is a leading cause of infectious diseases that leads to newborn deaths. According to Group B Strep International, it is the leading cause of blood infection and meningitis in newborns. GBS is a naturally occurring bacterium found "in the lower intestine of 10-35% of all healthy adults and in the vagina and/or lower intestine of 10-35% of all healthy, adult women." It is passed on to the baby during labor and delivery. Through testing at 35-37 weeks gestation and the administration of antibiotics intravenously 4-6 hours prior to the birth, GBS can be prevented from being transmitted to the baby. Researchers are working to develop a vaccine to address the transmission of the disease to babies. Information and fact sheets are available at the Group B Strep International web site at

<http://www.angelfire.com/ca/gbstrep/>.

MCFH Coalition Update

TIME TO REGISTER! Now is the time to register for MCFH Coalition's first annual conference, "How to BUILD ON Your Efforts with Cultural Competence". The keynote speaker is Dr. Sonja Boone, Director of Diversity and Medical Director of Physician Recruitment, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago, IL. She will motivate conference attendees to build on their efforts utilizing examples from her experiences. She will close the conference with concrete tools and examples of her work in Chicago. After January 31, conference fees increase. Conference brochures and registration are available on the Coalition's web site: www.stl-mcfhc.org. We are pleased to announce that CME and CEU credits will be available. Please call the office to indicate your interest in receiving these credits – 314-289-5686.

"Mapping a Course" continues to move forward. Thanks to the participation of providers and community members the second stage of the initiative has been completed. It is hoped that by the end of the second quarter of the year, the priorities will be presented to those who participated in the sessions and then released to the public.

The MCFHC FIMR program will partner with the American Lung Association to assess smoking during pregnancy, particularly among minority and low income women. The assessment will be funded by the Missouri Foundation for Health through a grant to the ALA. As a result of the study we hope to better understand why rates of smoking during pregnancy are rising.

Web Resources

1. NBDPN resources - <http://www.nbdpn.org/current/resources/bdpm2008.html>
2. Cervical Cancer resources - www.cervicalcancercampaign.org, <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/hpv-vaccine.pdf>, www.mo HPV.org
3. CDC – MMWR – publication regarding Perinatal Group B Strep
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5628a1.htm?s_cid=mm5628a1_e
4. Connect for Kids Weekly – Provides web connections that provide presidential candidates responses to questions on children's issues - http://www.connectforkids.org/newsletters/cfk_weekly

MCFH Coalition Welcomes New and Returning Members:

New – Kids Hope – Hudelson Region, Connie Brooks

Returning – Aileen McMurrer, Citizens for MO Children,

For additional information on any of the articles or for questions and comments contact:
jthompson@stl-mcfhc.org or call 314-289-5685