



Preconception Health and Health Care Update

Greetings

This is a monthly communication for individuals interested in improving the health of women and infants through preconception health and health care. We welcome your readership and contributions.

It's National Minority Health Month: Focus on Preconception Health



April is National Minority Health Month, and the focus in 2009 is on improving preconception health.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (DHHS-OMH) chose

preconception health as the focus for Minority Health Month April 2009; the theme is "Ordinary Couples Don't Plan Their Pregnancies: Be Extraordinary! Preconception health is a family affair." <http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=182>

Events in Indiana, Tennessee, and elsewhere across the country are planned for this month. DHHS-OMH has invited other state and local governments and offices of minority health to organize events to bring due attention to the importance of preconception health and preconception care for healthy pregnancies and the prevention of infant mortality. Materials, announcements, and updates are being regularly posted this month.

One recommended action is to get commitments from primary care providers to talk about preconception health to all their patients every Friday for the next six months.

This month's activities are linked to "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" a national campaign of the DHHS Office of Minority Health designed to raise awareness about infant mortality with an emphasis on the African American community. It is one focused effort to end health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities.

Call 1-800-444-6472 or email info@omhrc.gov for more information.

Moving toward Evidence-based Care for Women of Childbearing Age

The Select Panel on Preconception Care established implementation workgroups in 5 areas (clinical, public health, consumer, policy and finance, and research and surveillance) to develop strategies for the implementation of the recommendations on preconception health and healthcare.



Members of the clinical workgroup has studied and reported on some important questions. **What are the clinical components of preconception care? What is the evidence for inclusion of each component in clinical activities? What health promotion package should be delivered as part of preconception care?**

Over two years, more than 50 experts reviewed in depth more than 80 topics. Topics were selected on the basis of the effect of preconception care on the health of the mother and/or infant, prevalence, and detectability. Each topic was scored on the strength of the evidence and the strength of the recommendation for inclusion in preconception care.

A supplement to the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (AJOG) summarizes the evidence for the content of preconception care. This evidence is now ready to be translated into practice by professionals across the country. Have you looked?

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Featured Article

April is National Minority Health Month – the focus is on Preconception Health.

"Preconception care is more than physical, it has social, psychological and spiritual components"

*Renee Canady
Voice of African American Women: What is preconception planning?*

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Trying to keep track of policy?

The Kaiser Family Foundation provides information on women's health policy, coverage, and access to care. Visit to read: ***Making the Most of Medicaid: Promoting the Health of Women and Infants With Preconception Care***

<http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/index.cfm>

Also, click below to get free online access to the special supplement on policy and finance published in the journal ***Women's Health Issues***

[http://whjournal.com/issues/contents?issue_key=S1049-3867\(08\)X0007-6](http://whjournal.com/issues/contents?issue_key=S1049-3867(08)X0007-6)

The full text is available from the AJOG website:
[http://www.ajog.org/issues/contents?issue_key=S0002-9378\(08\)X0011-0](http://www.ajog.org/issues/contents?issue_key=S0002-9378(08)X0011-0)

Guidance from the National Business Group on Health

The prestigious National Business Group on Health has a model benefits package that includes a focus on improving maternal and infant health, with preconception coverage a component. They recommend that employer-benefit packages:

- Provide coverage for all FDA-approved contraceptives so that women are able to appropriately space their pregnancies.
- Provide adequate healthcare coverage to ensure that all women have access to preconception, prenatal, and post-partum care.
- Offer access to, and encourage the use of, employee assistance and health promotion programs that address pregnancy (nutrition, prenatal care, alcohol-use, smoking, etc).
- Provide employees with free educational materials relating to pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care.

<http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/healthtopics/birthspacingarticle.cfm>