



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

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Dear Prevention Partners:

The Michigan Birth Defects Program is pleased to provide resource materials for use during *Birth Defects Prevention Month*, January 2007. Of special interest during January is *National Folic Acid Awareness Week*, set for January 8-14, 2007. We hope these materials are helpful to you in providing information about birth defects to families, colleagues, policy makers and others during Birth Defects Prevention Month and throughout the year.

Preconceptional health is the topic of focus for this year's packet. Having regular check-ups with a health care provider *prior* to conception is a good start. But optimal preconceptional health means much more: consuming 400 micrograms of folic acid daily; knowing one's family history; seeking reproductive genetic counseling, when appropriate; managing chronic maternal illnesses; avoiding alcohol, nicotine, and illicit drugs; ensuring that prescription medication and herbal supplements are safe at the time of conception and during early pregnancy; avoiding harmful occupational and environmental exposures; avoiding infections and ensuring protection against domestic violence are all important elements of preconceptional health.

Birth defects are a leading cause of mortality and morbidity in Michigan's infants and children. Approximately 10,000 Michigan babies are born with birth defects each year. The Michigan Department of Health (MDCH) collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to use Michigan Birth Defects Registry (MBDR) data for prevention efforts and to help assure that children with birth defects receive appropriate intervention services.

These materials were developed in partnership with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN). New this year, the Birth Defects Prevention Month packet and additional resources are available online. Please visit www.MIGeneticsConnection.org. Our hope is that these resources will be useful to you in promoting awareness of birth defects and birth defects prevention. We would like to know how you use these materials. **Please complete the evaluation form**, which can be found on the left side of the packet.

For further information please contact Joan Ehrhardt, Birth Defects Program Coordinator or Jane Simmermon, Follow-up Coordinator toll-free at 1-866-852-1247 or e-mail BDRFollowup@michigan.gov. Thank you for helping promote birth defect prevention and awareness, especially during Birth Defects Prevention Month, January 2007.

Sincerely,

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