

**VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON FOLIC ACID
PROGRESS REPORT
January – September 2005**

OVERVIEW

Since the Virginia Council on Folic Acid (VCFA) inception in 1999, the VCFA has targeted the communication for women of childbearing age to eat foods high in folate and the use of folic acid supplements to health care professionals, the priority population, and the general public.

Educational materials are available for the awareness and necessity about folic acid. The material availability and distribution is maintained as well as outreach to pertinent professionals, agencies, programs, and the public.

The Virginia Council on Folic Acid (VCFA) concentrates prevention activities in three major areas: Professional Education, Community Education, and Mass Media. VCFA has 49 members with representatives from diverse organizations, inclusive yet not limited to March of Dimes, Head Start, Virginia Department of Health, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Virginia Dietetic Association, Virginia Perinatal Councils, Virginia Dental Association, Virginia Chapter of American Association of Pediatrics, Virginia Pharmacy Association, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Organizations and agencies that are not members of the Council also support the campaign, i.e. For The Children Partners in Prevention, Inc.; local health departments; and Healthy Start Programs.

The programs mentioned as well as those not specifically designated have provided the following resources (Jan. – Sept. 2005):

Community Education	Participants: 371,341. Materials Distributed: 42,154.
Professional Education	Participants: 3169. Materials Distributed: 51,579.
Mass Media	Press Releases: 2 from VDH. TV Advertisements purchased: 584. Radio Interviews: 2. Newspaper articles (tracked): 12. TV news: 2 stations. TV Ticker tape: 2 shows.
Distribution of Folic Acid Supplements (400 mcg)	By community programs 65.
Distribution of Folic Acid Supplements (400 mcg)	To Health Districts for Folic Acid Supplement Distribution Program: 30,312 bottles.

ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS 2005

Media:

- Press Release: National Folic Acid Awareness Week, January 21, 200.

- Press Release: Folic Acid Supplement Distribution Program. July 25, 2005. Generated approximately 12 news articles, two radio interviews, two newscasts, and two TV Show ticker tapes
- Mass Media: TV Advertisements purchased: 449 spots. 12 stations Feb. 21 – March 13, 2005. 21 spots: 1 station – June 24 – 30, 2005.

Professional Conferences:

- National Birth Defects Prevention Network Conference, January 24 – 26, 2005
- Birdsong Pediatric Conference, April 29 – May 1, 2005
- 21st Annual Southwest Virginia Pediatrics Conference, August 6 -7, 2005

Health Fairs:

- Virginia State University – National Folic Acid Awareness Week, January 28, 2005
- Eastern Shore Rural Health Annual Health Fair, March 19, 2005
- Women and Girls’ Wellness EXPO, April 2, 2005
- Virginia Union University Health Fair, April 4, 2005
- Chesapeake Hospital, April 10, 2005
- Rockingham Memorial Hospital, April 17, 2005
- VDH Public Service Day, May 3, 2005
- Defense Supply Center, July 13, 2005
- RAM – Remote Area Medical, Wise, Virginia, July 29-30, 2005
- St. Joseph’s Villa Family and Community Services, July 30-31, 2005
- Roanoke Health Fair, August 6, 2005
- Health Fairs – Elementary Schools/High Schools
- State Fair of Virginia

March of Dimes Presentations/Activities:

- Churches
- Colleges
- Health Care Providers
- Worksites
- WalkAmerica – various locations

Perinatal Council Programs:

- **“Breathe Easy Baby!”** Program – smoking cessation program sponsored by Southwest Perinatal Council; program materials contain folic acid information
- Community Voice Classes – South Central Perinatal Council
- Extensive Material Distribution; Health Care Providers Newsletter Article – Blue Ridge Perinatal Council

VDH Folic Acid Supplement Distribution Project:

- Implementation – July 2005
- A folic acid supplement distribution program has been designed to serve approximately 59% patients whom use the health department family planning clinics. The intention is to provide folic acid supplementation to the patients with the highest prevention need over the longest period of time.
- The target population was selected from the Health Districts with the highest rates of neural tube defects and the health districts with the highest number of Latino women

served. An initial intake and follow up assessment questionnaires will be distributed to evaluate the distribution of folic acid supplements.

- After the completion of an assessment questionnaire without patient identifiers, each patient at the family planning (FP) clinics and walk in pregnancy test clients at the health department will receive bottle(s) of 400 micrograms of folic acid (100 pills/bottle; approximately 3-month supply). The initial receipt of the bottle will continue for twelve months (implementation: July 2005 – June 2006). The maximum number of bottles for each FP patient to receive is three (approximately nine month supply). Anticipated total distribution of folic acid supplements: 113,750 bottles.
- Total Number of Health Districts and Family Planning Patients Selected for Program:

Criteria for Selection:	Total Number of Health Districts	Per Cent of Total Health Districts	Total Number of Family Planning Patients	Per Cent of Total Number of Family Planning Patients
Spina bifida without anencephaly ≥ 5.24	12	34%	28,030	38%
High Density of Hispanic Population	7	20%	15,763	21%
TOTAL	19	54%	43,793	59%

VCFA Annual Meeting, October 14, 2005:

- Folic Acid: The Prevention of Neural Tube Defects and Its Expanded Role in Health - Dr. Katharine Wenstrom, Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Update on Newborn Screening - Sharon Williams, M.S., R.N., Virginia Genetics Program Manager, Virginia Department of Health
- Distribution of the video: Embryology with Dr. Thomas Sadler – The Neural Tube; The Heart; The Craniofacial System at VFCA Annual Meeting and to thirty-five Health Districts