Public Health Improvement Newsletter

Winter 2010-2011
December 2010—February 2011

National WEAR RED DAY 02.04.11

In 2004, the American Heart Association (AHA) faced a challenge. Cardiovascular disease claimed the lives of nearly 500,000 American women each year, yet women were not paying attention. In fact, many even dismissed it as an "older man's disease." To dispel the myths and raise awareness of heart disease as the number one killer of women, the American Heart Association created *Go Red For Women* – a passionate, emotional, social initiative designed to empower women to take charge of their heart health.

Go Red For Women encourages awareness of the issue of women and heart disease, and also action to save more lives. The movement harnesses the energy, passion and power women have to band together and collectively wipe out heart disease. It challenges them to know their risk for heart disease and take action to reduce their personal risk. It also gives them the tools they need to lead a heart healthy life.

In 2010, the American Heart Association set a strategic goal of reducing death and disability from cardiovascular disease and strokes by 20% while improving the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20% by the year 2020.

In the past, heart disease and heart attack have been predominantly associated with men. Historically, men have been the subjects of the research done to understand heart disease and stroke, which has been the basis for treatment guidelines and programs. This led to an oversimplified, distorted view of heart disease and risk, which has worked to the detriment of women. Because women have been largely ignored as a specific group, their awareness of their risk of this often-preventable disease has suffered. Only 55% of women realize heart disease is their No. 1 killer and less than half know what are considered healthy levels for cardiovascular risk factors like blood pressure and cholesterol. The Go Red For Women movement works to make sure women know they are at risk so they can take action to protect their health.
To learn more, visit www.goredforwomen.org, or www.heart.org

Excerpt from www.goredforwomen.org, "Learn the Basics."

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Funding Opportunities

Program	Funding Agency	Website
The Big Read Program—Brings partners together to encourage reading.	National Endowment for the Arts	http://www.neabigread.org/application_process.php
Champions for Healthy Kids Grant Program	General Mills	http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding_details.php?funding_id=327

PHI Program Manager's Corner

The 2011 New Year is almost here. The waving goodbye to 2010 and the welcoming of 2011 give us the opportunity to reflect upon past year activities and achievements and plan and prepare for new experiences.

During 2010, with your partnership, we reviewed preventable hospitalization information and discussed ways to decrease this rate and reduce community-wide medical costs. We worked with you on issues challenging our high school students. We learned of "new" and easily available drug substances that target our youth; and together we informed and educated our community neighbors.

Many of you continued searching deeply into your community resources to see how you could best address local safety and health. You looked into issues pertaining to diabetes; healthcare workforce in your community; tobacco use; the potential dangers associated with social networking among our youth; the value of bacterial pneumonia immunizations and others.

We enjoyed the opportunity to work with many of you for the very first time. Some of you showed your commitment to your communities' concerns and needs and we saw you survey their perspectives.

In the coming year, we look forward to continuing our work with you and forming new relationships with others whom we have not previously worked with.

For a 2011 early-in-the-year public health observance, we'll give attention to the prevention of women's heart disease and then shortly thereafter we'll highlight the theme of the 2011 National Public Health Week: Safety is No Accident - Live Injury Free.

More information about this public health event will be coming in the early spring, in time for the April observance.

Thank you to all for working with us during 2010 and we look forward to seeing you again in 2011. We wish good health to you, your loved ones, and your community.

Low Fat Spinach Dip

This low fat spinach dip makes a terrific appetizer. Serve with a platter of fresh vegetables or with some baked chips or breadsticks. Use frozen chopped spinach if you prefer. You can spice it up a little by adding a dash of hot sauce.

Ingredients:

10 ounces fresh baby spinach, steamed until wilted
1 cup plain fat-free yogurt, drained of excess water
4 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup finely chopped scallions
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Preparation:

Place wilted spinach in a colander and squeeze out excess water. Chop finely and place in a medium bowl. Stir yogurt and cream cheese together until smooth. Add to spinach. Stir in remaining ingredients and blend thoroughly. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes about 2 cups.

Per serving (1/4 cup): Calories 55, Calories from Fat 11, Total Fat 1.3g

Health Observances

December 2010

- **1:** World AIDS Day
  www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/
- **5-11:** National Handwashing Awareness Week
  www.henrythehand.com

January 2011

- **1-31:** National Birth Defects Prevention Month
  www.nbdpn.org/current/resources/bdpm2010
- **1-31:** Cervical Health Awareness Month
  www.nccc-online.org/awareness.html

February 2011

- **5:** National Wear Red Day/Go Red for Women
  www.goredforwomen.org
- **1-28:** National Children's Dental Health Month
  www.ada.org/prof/events/featured/ncdhm.asp

K2 or Fake Marijuana Use on the Rise

There has been a recent surge in the number of young people being admitted to the hospital ER after smoking synthetic marijuana or "K2," with symptoms like racing heart beats, extreme anxiety and hallucinations. Since the beginning of 2010, the American Association of Poison Control Centers has received nearly 2000 reports about people becoming sick after smoking K2, compared to only a dozen in 2009.[1]

K2 is currently being marketed as an "incense" or "herbal smoking blend" but the product is usually smoked by users. It is also marketed as a legal alternative to marijuana. The product is sold in small packets of herbs that contain the synthetic marijuana and is sold in head shops, gas stations, and even convenience stores, and can also be bought online for about $30 or $40 per three gram packet. The drug is best known as K2 and Spice, although it also goes by other names such as Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Yucatan Fire, Solar Flare, among others.[2]

Several states have outlawed K2. Earlier this year, Kansas was the first state to ban the drug and other states have followed, including Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Alabama, Michigan, and Illinois. Similar bills are pending in other states, while locally, cities like Plano, Mansfield and McKinney are passing ordinances that will ban its use.

For more information visit http://www.justice.gov/ndic/

1. "Fake Marijuana" Users showing up in the Emergency Room, www.healthfinder.gov
2. Drug Alert Watch, National Drug Intelligence Center, www.justice.gov/ndic/

For Women: Know the Signs of a Heart Attack or Stroke!

If you or someone you know shows signs of heart attack or stroke, call 9-1-1 right away. An Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team can begin treatment when it arrives. That means treatment can begin sooner than it would if the patient arrived at the hospital by car. What's more, the EMS team is also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped, which saves hundreds of lives each year.

Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, causing someone to gasp dramatically, clutch her heart and drop to the ground. No one has any doubts about what's happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often the people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help.

Here are some signs a heart attack may be happening:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. This feeling may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs of discomfort. These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
- As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

If you or someone you are with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, don't wait longer than five minutes before calling 9-1-1 for help.

Stroke Warning Signs

Stroke is a medical emergency. Learn to recognize a stroke, because any delay in treatment can lead to brain damage. Warning signs may include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Not all these warning signs occur in every stroke. If you or someone with you has one or more stroke symptoms that last more than a few minutes, don't delay! Immediately call 9-1-1 or the EMS number so an ambulance (ideally with advanced life support) can quickly be sent to you. Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared. It's very important to take immediate action. If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke. Remember to learn about your risk factors and start making small lifestyle changes to live a heart healthy life!

Heart Healthy at Any Age. "Signs of Heart Attack" http://www.goredforwomen.org/heart_healthy_at_any_age.aspx

DSHS Program Highlight:
Texas Birth Defects Epidemiology and Surveillance

The Birth Defects Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch (BDES) encompasses two major components: the Texas Birth Defects Registry and the Texas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. In order to respond to community concerns about excess occurrence of birth defects, the Texas Birth Defects Registry was established to identify and describe the patterns of birth defects in Texas through operation of an active surveillance system.

BDES was established in 1993 as the result of an unusual cluster of anencephaly cases (a type of neural tube defect) that occurred in Brownsville, Texas. Epidemiologic investigations revealed a higher than expected rate of neural tube defects among children born to Hispanic mothers living in South Texas. In recognition that epidemiologic resources are routinely needed to investigate birth defects clusters, the Texas State Legislature passed the Texas Birth Defects Act in 1993, which authorized the establishment of BDES.

Since 1994, BDES has maintained the Texas Birth Defects Registry, population-based birth defects surveillance system, which is now statewide. Through multiple sources of information, the Registry monitors all births in Texas (approximately 380,000 each year) and identifies cases of birth defects. Children identified through the Registry are referred to appropriate medical and community services.

The Registry employs an active surveillance approach, which entails staff routinely visiting all hospitals and birthing centers where affected children are delivered or treated. Staff review logs to find potential cases, and medical records to identify those indicating one or more birth defects. They then abstract relevant information onto a form designed for this purpose. All information is held in strict confidence in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.

The program also collaborates with researchers in finding causes of birth defects, working towards prevention and linking families with services. The CDC-funded Research Center uses Registry data to conduct epidemiologic studies to find the preventable causes of birth defects in Texas.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a birth defect?

According to the Texas Birth Defects Act of 1993, a birth defect is a physical or mental functional deficit or impairment in a human embryo, fetus, or newborn resulting from one or more genetic or environmental causes.

How do I contact the Texas Birth Defects Registry?

Call 512.458.7232 or 1.888.963.7111

Who do I contact to get services for my child?

2-1-1 Texas, a program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, helps citizens connect with needed services. Simply dial 211.

For more information, contact Birth Defects Epidemiology & Surveillance, Texas Department of State Health Services, at 512-458-7232 or 1-888-963-7111.

Decreasing Bacterial Pneumonia in Montague and Fannin Counties

Bacterial pneumonia causes hundreds of hospitalizations every year in the United States; however, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, it is a disease that can be prevented with the right community efforts. Montague and Fannin Counties have recently begun efforts to reduce the incidence of bacterial pneumonia in residents, as well as rates of hospitalizations resulting from this disease. Rates of hospitalizations for bacterial pneumonia in Montague and Fannin Counties were significantly above the Texas average during the four-year period of 2005-2008, but the Health Partnership of Montague County and the Fannin County Health Coalition are determined to protect citizens from this sometimes deadly disease by bringing those rates down.

Recently, both groups have begun educating providers, high-risk groups, and the general public on the importance of increasing the number of people who are vaccinated against bacterial pneumonia. They are focusing their education efforts on two segments of the population: people aged 65 or older, and those adults with high-risk conditions that make them more likely to get pneumonia. High-risk conditions include diabetes, heart conditions, asthma, kidney disease, liver disease, cancer, and HIV/AIDS, among others.

The Health Partnership of Montague County began their efforts on this pneumonia-reduction project by asking the Department of State Health Services to educate their membership, which occurred at the October 2010 coalition meeting. Then members began collaborating with local elected officials, the hospitals in the county, and health providers to talk about the need to vaccinate more people. All the members present at the October Health Partnership meeting volunteered to contact at least two or more businesses to encourage people to ask their doctors if they need the pneumonia vaccine. A special vaccination clinic has already taken place in conjunction with the annual Nocona Health Fair to allow additional opportunities for people to receive pneumonia shots. Flyers promoting the need for pneumonia shots are being posted at numerous locations all over the county, such as laundromats, food pantries, drug stores, senior centers, the courthouse, the WIC & Food Stamp Offices, and area restaurants. Partnership members are talking to senior citizen groups, and asking local newspapers to write articles about the importance of getting a pneumonia vaccine.

Ask your doctor about the pneumonia shot today!

The Fannin Health Coalition also began their work in October 2010. The Local Health Authority for the county educated coalition members about bacterial pneumonia and answered questions related to the disease and the vaccine that is available. Members also signed up to post flyers and posters in different locations around the county to educate community members and encourage them to ask their doctors about the pneumonia vaccine. Flyers will be posted at school districts throughout the county, WIC clinics, churches, and housing complexes. Future activities include collaborating with the local hospital and healthcare providers to promote the vaccine and provide immunization clinics to increase the immunization rate.

Both groups are working hard to protect the health of their citizens and they will continue working until almost every person in the county who is at high-risk for pneumonia is immunized.

For more information on the Health Partnership of Montague County or the Fannin Health Coalition, contact Carolyn English at 817-264-4509.

Meet Your PHI Regional Staff

Program Manager

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Program Specialists

Ana Luz Chiapa

Jane Schwarz

Marsha Waters

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Upcoming Events

12/3/10-12/5/10

28th Annual Infectious Disease Seminar for the Practicing Physician - Naples, Florida. For more information visit www.cdc.gov/about/newsEvents/events.htm

12/8/2010-12/10-2010

56th Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference—Plan, Prepare, Protect - Austin, Texas. For more information visit www.texasvsu.org

01/12/2011

Regional Child Health Summit, Cook Children's Network, Tarrant County College, Trinity River Campus in Fort Worth. For more information visit www.cchaps.org

2/23/11-2/26/11

The Arc of Texas—Inclusion Works! Conference. For more information visit www.thearcoftexas.org/conferences

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