



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.

AMCHP Conference Highlights Issues



The Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) featured a plenary session and a workshop on state strategies for improving preconception health. For the plenary - "Preconception Care: Identifying New Opportunities to Improve Women's and Children's Health," the speakers were Tonya Lewis Lee and Dr. Maxine Hayes.

Tonya Lewis Lee, wife of film director Spike Lee, is an advocate for education in infant mortality, which includes a role as official spokesperson for the "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" campaign launched by the US DHHS Office of Minority Health. Ms. Lee said that the U.S. ranks 29th in the world for infant mortality. "It's despicable, shameful and horrible," she said. "Most of the babies dying are African American, Hispanic and Native American. I feel not just for our women, but for our nation."

Dr. Maxine Hayes, Health Officer for Washington State, gave a powerful set of messages in her speech. The quotes that follow give a flavor of what she shared. The full speech can be downloaded from the AMCHP website: <http://www.amchp.org/homepage%20promo%20images/Maxine%20Hayes%20Speech.pdf>

"Women are the engine that keeps this nation moving forward, so it is in everyone's best interest to keep women healthy at all stages of life. Women are also the decision-makers on all health matters in families. For example, women decide who goes to the doctor for what and when; what food is purchased and how it is prepared; if immunizations are received; and if appointments for preventive care are kept...An investment in women's health is an upstream prevention policy action. In the past, the only time our nation has been willing to invest in a woman's health is after she gets pregnant. That is far too late..."

We must maximize every opportunity to optimize a woman's health prior to conception, planned or not. Doing so means promoting women's health over the lifespan and across the entire spectrum of public health programs... Timing is everything, and the time has come for MCH to be leaders for a woman's health agenda. I see the health of women as core to the health of entire communities... Remember, you cannot achieve what you can't envision. Let's all envision a new era for MCH, the heart of which are healthy women, healthy families, healthy communities, a healthy nation and a healthy world!"

Putting Preconception Health and Health Care into State Action

Leaders working on preconception health issues in California and Delaware presented in a workshop at the AMCHP conference.

This session highlighted three distinct approaches that have been used by states to advance preconception health. First, a number of states have created new partnerships and coalitions to advance work in this area. Second, some states are integrating preconception health services into existing programs such as family planning. Third, states have taken a more comprehensive approach that involves Title V, private, and other resources to expand programs and access to care. Each has increased access to services for women of childbearing age with the goal of improving birth outcomes and reducing disparities. A video of this workshop will soon be posted at www.amchp.org. Presentations included:

- **Maryjane Puffer** (Director of Clinical and Community Health Programs for California Family Health Council, Inc.) spoke about a special initiative in Title X Family Planning.
- **Kiko Malin** (Preconception Health Coordinator in the Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health Division of the Center for Family Health in the California Department of Public Health) described the creation and activities of the California Council on Preconception Care. The Council is a public-private partnership involving an array of state leaders.
- **Charlan Kroelinger** (Scientific Director in the Center for Family Health Research and Epidemiology and State MCH Epidemiologist for the Delaware Division of Public Health) presented a case study of efforts from the legislature to community level services in Delaware.
- **Kay Johnson** (Senior Advisor to the CDC Preconception Health and Health Care Initiative) served as moderator for the session and gave an update on current activities across the country.

To learn more about States' Preconception Health Efforts

California

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/preconception/Pages/default.aspx>
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/healthyLiving/childfamily/Pages/PreconceptionHealthandHealthCareInitiativeFactSheet.aspx>
<http://www.amchp.org/publications/WomensHealth/Documents/AMCHP%20CA%20Preconception%20Health%20Case%20StudyI.pdf>

Delaware

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/chca/impreconceptioncare.html>
<http://download.journals.elsevierhealth.com/pdfs/journals/1049-3867/PIIS1049386708000947.pdf>

In This Issue

[Highlights of AMCHP Conference](#)



Featured Article

AMCHP annual conference focuses on preconception health. Dr. Maxine Hayes ignites audience.

"We must maximize every opportunity to optimize a woman's health prior to conception, planned or not. Doing so means promoting women's health over the lifespan and across the entire spectrum of public health programs." Dr. Maxine Hayes

[Find out more.](#)

Legislative Update:

The H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker Stokes Mom's Opportunity to Access Health, Education, Research, and Support for Postpartum Depression Act or the Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives on March 20, 2009 by a vote of 391 to 8. Companion Senate bill S. 324 is pending in committee.

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Other State Examples

New Jersey

<http://www.mombaby.org/PDF/New%20Jersey%20Preconception%20Health%20Initiatives.pdf>

http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/documents/task_force_report.pdf

http://www.nj.gov/health/commiss/documents/speech/prenatal_care_testimony.pdf

North Carolina

http://www.nchealthystart.org/downloads2/preconception_health_strategic_plan.pdf

<http://www.mombaby.org/PDF/PreconceptionHealthcare.pdf>

Articles and reports on state-level efforts

AMCHP report

<http://www.amchp.org/ABOUTAMCHP/NEWSLETTERS/PULSE/FEBRUARY2009/Pages/PreconceptionCare.aspx>

Trust for America's Health report <http://healthyamericans.org/report/44/healthy-women-healthy-babies>

Journal article by Kent and Streeter, 2008 <http://www.whijournal.com/article/PIIS1049386708001345/fulltext>

Journal article by Boulet et al, 2006 <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?>

[artid=1592247&blobtype=pdf](http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1592247&blobtype=pdf)

Conference Announcement

The 15th Annual Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology (MCH EPI) Conference will be held December 9-11, 2009 in Tampa, Florida.

This year's keynote speaker will be Dr. David Barker, Pioneer of the Fetal Origins Hypothesis. For more information,

visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/MCHEpi2009/AboutConference.htm>