

**Title of Project:** Community Folic Acid Campaign  
**Agency Name:** Cumberland Valley District Health Department  
**State:** Kentucky  
**Key Word Descriptors:** Media, Restaurant and Business Education, Lesson Plan

**Description of Project:**

Cumberland Valley District Health Department was awarded a grant in 1999 by the March of Dimes to implement a Community Folic Acid Campaign. The goal of the program was to increase knowledge of the recommended daily intake of folic acid to help reduce the overall incidence of neural tube defects. Nationally, birth defects have been the leading cause of infant mortality for 20 years. According to the Kentucky Birth Surveillance Registry, Kentucky has the highest rate of infant mortality due to birth defects in the nation. In 1997, of 382 infants deaths, 27.5% were caused by birth defects.

The Campaign consisted of three objectives;

1. Conduct a folic acid media blitz in the community
2. Collaborate with at least one fast food restaurant in each of the five counties in Cumberland Valley District to increase knowledge of folic acid benefits, recommended daily intake of folic acid, and common food sources
3. Increase knowledge of the recommended daily intake of folic acid, benefits, common food sources, and increase knowledge by 40% with participating high school students

Activities to meet these objectives included:

- Newspaper and radio public service announcements
- Posters and brochures delivered to local businesses and community service organizations
- Folic acid table tents were developed and placed in business breakrooms, cafeterias, and restaurants
- Tray liners were developed to provide folic acid education and were distributed and utilized by McDonalds (Dairy Queen in one county) for National Nutrition Month, March of 1999

### Activities (cont.):

- Participated in a Community Health Fair; Folic acid education was provided and samples of orange juice and Chex Mix were provided
- Collaborated with another agency to get a billboard designed for folic acid education
- A folic acid lesson plan was developed and taught at 5 high schools
- Conducted pre- and post-tests to assess knowledge of folic acid with participating high school students
- A folic acid theme day was planned with school food service (Breakfast served: fortified cereals, milk and orange juice; Lunch served: bean burrito, Spanish rice, tossed salad and orange wedges)

### Results of the Project:

Through the activities of the Community Folic Acid Campaign in Cumberland Valley Health District:

1. We reached a potential population of 116, 231
2. Approximately 10,000 tray liners were utilized by McDonalds and Dairy Queen in five' counties
3. One hundred businesses across Cumberland Valley District utilized folic acid table tents in break-rooms, cafeterias, or dining room areas
4. Of 139 pre- and post-tests that we were able to score, 100% of students improved on the post-test

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