

California Preconception Care Initiative

Every Woman, Every Time



Dear California Health Care Provider:

The California District of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the California Academy of Family Physicians and the March of Dimes urge you to join them in improving the practice of preconception care, which will enhance the health status of women and infants in important ways.

Recognizing that 60 percent of pregnancies in California are unintended, we believe there is an urgent need to more fully integrate preconception services into the delivery of health care to all women of reproductive age. Toward that end, the California Preconception Care Initiative—a three-year project funded by the March of Dimes—highlights ways to creatively weave the most essential elements of preconception care and counseling into the existing constraints of our health care delivery system.

We are pleased to send you this provider/patient educational package, which is designed to assist you by:

- *describing the essential elements of preconception care that can be cost-effective and beneficial for all women of reproductive age.*

You will find this information in the executive summary of the California Preconception Care Background Report, prepared for the March of Dimes by Carol Korenbrot, Ph.D., of the University of California, San Francisco Institute for Health Policy Studies, and her colleagues. The full report, including California-specific data, is available online at www.modimes-ca.org. (On the home page, click "Programs.")

- *helping you promote behavioral changes among your patients to improve their health status and reduce their risk of pregnancies affected by birth defects or low birthweight.*

You'll find seven printed patient education sheets, written at a reading level that is no higher than 8th grade, on these priority topics: folic acid, diabetes, infections and immunizations, medical and genetic conditions, domestic violence, smoking and healthy lifestyle choices (diet, exercise, alcohol and drugs). We encourage you to photocopy these and distribute them widely to women of reproductive age.

- *helping you with billing for preconception care.*

Specifically, you will find examples of the relevant CPT codes for billing through the State Family PACT program, which provides lower-income women with coverage. Since private insurance plans vary in terms of their coverage of preconception services, you will need to call the specific carrier to verify the patient's coverage.

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Since preconceptional interventions aimed at improving pregnancy outcome are time critical, they must be part of the patient's ongoing care. *In terms of day-to-day practice, there are two ideal times to integrate preconception care:*

- 1) *during a preventive primary care visit.* This is a time when many patients welcome suggestions for risk modification and disease prevention.
- 2) *during a visit that includes a negative pregnancy test.* Because this is a time when many women learn how easily an unintended pregnancy can occur, they tend to be motivated to improve their health in case, next time, they do conceive.

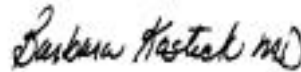
More than two years in development, the California Preconception Care Initiative is the work of more than 30 health care professionals and their organizations in California. These individuals, whose names are printed on the front of this letter, represent the following organizations: the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District IX, the California Academy of Family Physicians, the March of Dimes, UCSF, UCLA, UC Irvine, the University of Southern California, Kaiser Permanente, the California Department of Health Services, Sutter Medical Center Sacramento, Sutter Medical Group, the Alameda Alliance for Health, Cal OPTIMA, Genzyme West Coast Genetics, the North Bay Healthcare Medical Group, the Orange County Perinatal Council and the South Los Angeles Health Projects.

We hope you will take time to review the materials in this packet and make an effort to incorporate this information and these tools into your work. Together, we can take a big step forward in improving the health of California women and infants.

Sincerely,



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P.S. Please take a minute to evaluate this educational package using the enclosed form. It will help us improve the effectiveness of future materials.