

The Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership Meeting
January 24, 2002
Frankfort, Kentucky

Members present: Dr. Steve Davis, Susan Brown, Katrina Adams, Sara Dunlap, Rhonda Woolum, Jaime Rafferty, Paul Hopkins, Delena Young, Renee Neace, Lynnett Fortney, Amy Jackson, Shellie Ryan, Bonita Bobo, Diane Sprowl, Linda Lancaster, Tracey Miller, Gil Lawson, Sandra Conner, Jennifer Jarman, Denise Maples, Joyce Robl, Tamara Johnson, Donna Chapman, Eugenia Smither, Susan Borders, Roxanne O. True, Audra Smith, Alan Jones for Pat Seybold, Lorie Chesnut, Emma Walters, and Fran Hawkins.

Unable to attend: Dr. David Adamkin, Dr. Ruth Ann Shepherd, Shari Stewart, and Sharon Owen.

Call to order and welcome per Dr. Steve Davis, Chairman.

Guest speaker, Brenda Schissler

Mrs. Schissler resides in Crestwood, Kentucky (Oldham County-4th District). She is a lobbyist and owner of “The Capital Connection,” a lobbying group. She has been a small business owner for over 23 years.

Her topic: **“How to Grab Your Legislator’s Attention,”** was an informative presentation followed with several handouts, and time for Q & A. We were offered new insight on how best to reach our legislators. Mrs. Schissler stressed that since September 11, 2001, mail to elected officials is being judged more carefully. To be sure your mail is read you need to make it as personal as possible:

- ❖ Information must be timely
- ❖ Stay on message
- ❖ Assign a network person to work with each legislator
- ❖ Look for someone who is a constituent
- ❖ Letters are preferred
- ❖ Handwritten letters, postcards are best
- ❖ Do not use letters that are mass produced
- ❖ All mail needs to have a return address on the outside of the envelop
- ❖ Return address should be printed and legible, full name, street, city, state and zip code
- ❖ One page letters are best. Details or lengthy explanations can be attached to your cover letter or summary
- ❖ Do not use “Dear Legislator” or “Dear Senator.” Always use individual names, such as “Dear Representative Feeley.”
- ❖ Few Representatives and Senators use email. Unless you are from the district and are known to the elected official it is unlikely your email will be read.
- ❖ Ask individuals who will be affected by legislation to call
- ❖ Use “Letters to the Editor” in hometown newspapers to define issues
- ❖ Nothing works better than personal contact by constituents. Hand written letters are best followed by telephone calls

Handouts included information on: Writing a Press Release, Communicating with Your Legislator, 15 Tips on Making Friends in the Legislature, How a Bill Becomes Law, and **YOU** Need to Know How...

- To find out who your Kentucky Senator and Representative's are
- To Contact Legislators in Frankfort
- To Contact the Governor
- To Contact Other Executive Branch Officials
- To Track Legislation
- To Keep Up

She suggested that if a letter writing campaign is done, it is **best** to do your own letter and get 10 other people to do the same letter with a different body. Then the same 10 people need to call the 1-800 number to follow through. She also suggested several books: 'The Kentucky Gazette-Kentucky Roll Call, by Lowell Reece, "Who's What In Kentucky Government" (pictures of all the legislators-committees, voting record, home address, phone number and spouse's name. Sells for \$10.00, call 1-800-426-6204 to order. There are two publications that are free, but must be obtained in person: State Government prints a pictorial book and can be picked up in the basement of the capitol; "Inside the General Assembly" is another free publication. Ms. Schissler discussed that it may take years to pass a bill, and cautioned us that we can't afford to be too emotional or a bill may be lost. She also reminded us to not underestimate getting to know the staff of our legislators... "The gatekeeper is a good friend to have." Final thought: "The principles in business are the same principles in Frankfort." *Those of you who missed the meeting and would like copies of the handouts...please email me with your request and I will send them to you.*

Chairman's Report: Dr. Steve Davis

Uplifting as always, Dr. Davis compared the Folic Acid Campaign to the Super Bowl, and thus praised the partners with his assurance that, "We are winning our Super Bowl." He reported that the KIDS NOW Initiative is alive and well and that Governor Patton continues to publicly confirm his support to use 25% of the tobacco settlement monies for the KIDS NOW Initiative. In fact, KIDS NOW is expanding to also include four new Initiatives:

- ❖ Children's oral health
- ❖ Children's mental health (Preventive & Access to Care-from birth to age 5)
- ❖ KEIS program (First Steps)
- ❖ Child advocacy programs (Centers dedicated to helping children of abuse)

The design for these new Initiatives are in their infancy.

For the year 2002, KIDS NOW is not a legislative issue, but a part of the budget issue. Dr. Davis shared 5 bullets about the folic acid campaign's progress. They are:

- ❖ Neural Tube Defects: From 1996-2000—There was a 35% decrease in the number of babies born with open-spine defects, according to data from the Kentucky Birth Surveillance Registry. In 1996, there were 66 babies born with open-spine defect, compared to 43 babies in 2000. Therefore, 23 fewer babies were born with this devastating birth defect.
- ❖ Low Birth Weight/Very Low Birth Weight
- ❖ Abuse/Neglect
- ❖ Immunizations
- ❖ NB Hearing Screening

What has made the change? Most likely a combination of food fortification, folic acid supplementation program, efforts of: the March of Dimes, Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky, the Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership and healthcare providers—all of us. The calendar year 2000 also showed a lower infant mortality rate in Kentucky. “Folks, it’s working! I personally thank you and the children thank you.” Doc D.

Recognition of Outstanding Folic Acid Partners: Susan Brown & Dr. Davis

Susan Brown reiterated the fact that it takes us all to be a Partnership. She feels we are blessed with a majority of outstanding people within the KFAP. Those we are about to honor are those who received nominations from their peers. Every partner was given an opportunity to participate.

Honorees nominated included 11 individuals and 3 organizations/agencies. Each honoree received a framed certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Service from the CDC, and the Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership. Black wooden frames were provided by the Barren River District Health Department. Each honoree also received a printed memento, commemorating the exact expression of praise shared by individual partners who had nominated them for this honor.

The fourteen recipients (in alphabetical order) are: Katrina Adams, Susan Brown, Sarah Chaffin, Lorie Chesnut, Dr. Steve Davis, Sara Dunlap, Deborah S. Fillman, Linda Lancaster, Joyce Robl, Diane Sprowl, The Barren River District Health Department, The Greater Kentucky Chapter of the March of Dimes, The Kentucky Department for Public Health, and Linda Villwock. Congratulations to these outstanding honorees!

Gil Lawson took a picture of the honorees and plans a press release to all hometown media of the recipients.

Business Meeting: Susan Brown

Approval of the September Minutes-motioned and seconded to approve.

Evaluation of the 2001 Plan-All members received copies of the 2001 evaluation.

Welcome and congratulations to Jaime Rafferty-New Media Committee Chair

Old Business: Gil Lawson played a PSA from the new ad campaign for Healthy Me Healthy Baby, (a new Initiative under KIDS NOW). The ad campaign targets 20 communities. Besides the TV PSA's these 20 communities will also receive parenting tapes (set of 6) and a guidebook for the parents of every new baby born in 2002. In Frankfort, there will be ads on the buses, billboards, in the malls. The PSA commercial spots in these 20 communities will run during popular primetime shows like Friends and also on MTV. Every library and birthing hospital in Kentucky will also receive a set of parenting tapes. (50,000 I Am Your Child-videos). Meridian is in charge of the ad campaign and the kick-off was held Dec. 4th in Lexington and Louisville. Actor, Director, CEO of the Reiner Foundation, but most of all, loving-father, Rob Reiner was a guest speaker. Both he and Governor Patton attended both press conferences. Gil also offered recommendations about the packets that went out to all HD's promoting January as Birth Defects Prevention Month. He urged all partners to use the information packet and re-write, or re-insert local names to the PSA's before submitting them to your local media. Hometown news is more likely to be picked up than a generic PSA. He reminded partners of the KIDS NOW clippings that can be found on the website. There are 169 radio stations that received a press release about Birth Defects Prevention Month.

New Business:

Input from Green River District-Jaime Rafferty, Barren River District-the three SAPO teams, and FIVCO District-Sara Dunlap, all confirmed the new tray liner is family friendly. The sample of the new tray liner with bold print and bullets was passed around the room for input from partners present. Comments were all favorable. (I was unable to receive input from Sarah Chaffin at the time of our meeting-but in a phone conversation later she voiced no complaints). Members decided to proceed with the next step (bidding process for the print job). Diane Sprowl will proceed with the bidding process once Holly Turney of red7e makes the appropriate changes of: color, (Folic Acid is supposed to be green and each capital B letter in the bullets are also to be green), and size, (tray liners are to be 8.5 x 11, smaller than the sample we received). Diane noted that it could take 2-3 weeks for the bidding process to be completed. If the time frame allows, members suggested a possible kick off of March to correspond with National Nutrition Month and the KPHA Conference in Louisville. A suggestion was also made to include distribution of the tray liners as part of the bidding process. (Distribution is to partners-not individual restaurants).

New 2002 Plan:

The plan was distributed to all members present. Each committee is responsible for its' final draft. Final drafts due in one month, to allow Media Committee time to meet. (Professional and Community will meet immediately after the KFAP meeting). Each committee chair is responsible for ensuring goals are achieved at year's end.

Thoughts shared from members:

Diane Sprowl distributed brochures for the KPA. For \$25 you can join the KPA and receive registration for the annual conference June 23-25, 2002 at Lake Cumberland State Park. Other benefits of membership: Free CEU'S and CME's, quarterly newsletter, networking with others interested in perinatal health from across the state, opportunity to help improve perinatal health in KY, opportunity to advocate for women and children at the legislative level, and education and information-sharing about current perinatal issues.

Sara Dunlap distributed a pamphlet about "Grantsmanship Training" Fall-2001-Winter-2002. The nearest location for us is in Louisville, KY dates: April 15-19. Phone number: 800-421-9512 or website: www.tgci.com

Next meeting date: May 23, 2002

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted per Susan Brown Statewide Folic Acid Campaign Coordinator