



The **HIP Surveillance Brief** is a resource to help inform and guide your agency's activities to address the HIP Focus Areas. The briefs are published by the **Washtenaw County Public Health Department** as part of the Health Improvement Plan initiative. This brief was authored by Sarah (Annie) Gebhardt and TaShara Coakley, summer interns at Public Health.

Overview

Preconception health is defined as a woman's overall health status before she becomes pregnant, both before her first pregnancy and then later between pregnancies. Improving preconception health can improve birth outcomes for both mother and baby, and reduce the risks of low birthweight, preterm birth, and infant mortality. Because about half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended, preconception health is important for all women, whether or not they are planning to become pregnant. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all women of childbearing age receive preconception health education, screening, and services during primary care visits.

Key aspects of preconception health include healthy nutrition and physical activity, refraining from smoking, binge-drinking alcohol, or using illicit drugs. Successfully managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and depression is also important for a woman's preconception health. Additional steps to improve preconception health include taking folic acid supplements, receiving immunizations to prevent infectious diseases; treating existing infections (including sexually transmitted infections, or STIs); improving oral health; and reducing exposure to hazardous conditions and pollutants at work and in the community.

Advocacy Action Tip!

Significant cuts in state & local funding for maternal & child health programs are in progress, as state appropriations subcommittees debate the 2009-2010 budget this summer. Contact your state legislators to voice your budget priorities for Michigan.

For more information, visit:

www.michiganschildren.org/index.php/Budget-Basics/Budget-Basics.html

To learn more about HIP, access HIP data electronically, or become a partner, please go to <http://hip.ewashtenaw.org>.

Figure 1: Percentage of Women of Childbearing Age (18-49 Years) Reporting Selected Preconception Health Risks (Washtenaw County Health Improvement Plan Survey, 2005)

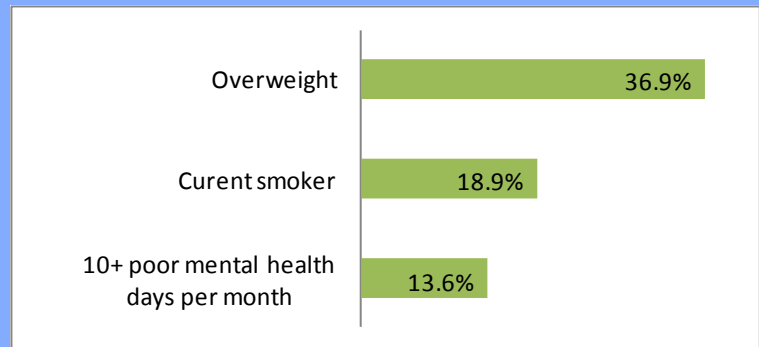
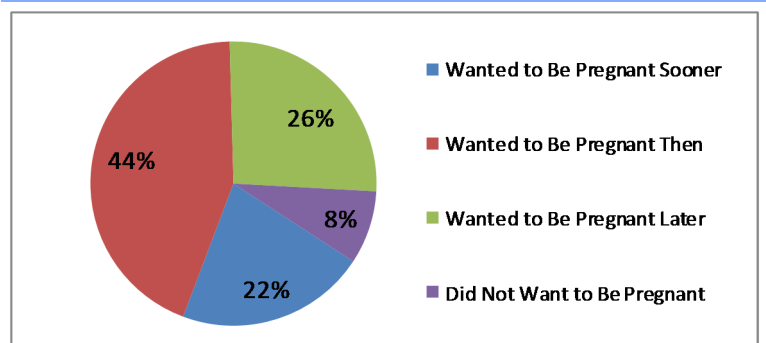


Figure 2: Pregnancy Intention Among Women Who Recently Gave Birth (Washtenaw County Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey, 2007)



What works: best practices

Recommended interventions for preconception health address three key levels: the individual, the community, and healthcare and public policy systems. Efforts to improve preconception health should encompass all women of child-bearing age, with additional programs tailored to the needs of women with known risks (such as a previous poor pregnancy outcome or a chronic health condition). Because unplanned pregnancies account for nearly half of all births, and are associated with higher rates of adverse birth outcomes, interventions to reduce unintended pregnancies and improve preconception health are important for the health of all women and their families. For more information, read the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/previeew/mmwrhtml/rr5506a1.htm>.

| Intervention Level | Strategy | Resources |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Individual | Clinical practice guidelines for primary care providers to assess patients' risk & intervene to prevent unintended pregnancy during all annual health exams. | Michigan Surgeon General, <i>MQIC Guideline to Prevent Unintended Pregnancy</i> : www.mqic.org/physis.htm |
| Community | Social marketing & health promotion campaigns to increase public awareness about preconception health, pregnancy planning, & childbearing outcomes. | Lindsey, LLM et al (2009). "Developing Effective Campaign Messages to Prevent Neural Tube Defects." |
| Systems | Medicaid waiver projects to expand coverage of family planning and preconception care services to women who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid benefits. | Johnson, KA (2006). "Public Finance Policy Strategies to Increase Access to Preconception Care" & MI's Plan First! Program: healthcare4mi.com |

HIP 2020 Objectives Related to Perinatal & Preconception Health

HEALTHY KIDS

- Increase the proportion of low-income females 18-49 years who initiate breastfeeding from 47% to 75%
- Decrease the mortality rate in black infants from 16 per 1,000 live births to 5 per 1,000 live births
- Decrease low birth weight rates in Black infants from 11% to 3% of live births

HEALTHY ADULTS

- Decrease the proportion of Black females 18-49 years who are overweight from 62% to 40%
- Decrease the proportion of Ypsilanti females 18-49 years who are current smokers from 37% to 12%
- Decrease the proportion of females 18-49 years who have ten or more poor mental health days per month from 14% to 7%

Local Resources

Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services

Planned pregnancies give women time and opportunity to get healthy before getting pregnant, often resulting in better birth outcomes. **The Corner Health Center** and **Planned Parenthood** offer community and patient education, contraception, screenings for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and other services to prevent unplanned pregnancy and improve preconception health. **Plan First!** is a state insurance program for low-income women ages 19-44, and covers family planning services and prescriptions.

The Corner Health Center
734-484-3600, ext. 200
www.cornerhealth.org

Planned Parenthood
734-485-0144 or 734-973-0710
www.plannedparenthood.org

Plan First! - Family Planning Program
For more information: 734-544-6840
<http://healthcare4mi.com>

Resources for Expectant Women and Mothers

Resources for emotional, social, and financial support during the childbearing year can positively affect maternal and infant health outcomes. **Doulas Care** connects women with a special mentor who provides support, education, and advocacy during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** helps pregnant women, new mothers, and young children eat well and stay healthy through nutrition counseling, food assistance, referrals, and other services.

Doulas Care
734-332-8070
<http://doulascare.org>

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
To apply: 734-544-6800
<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org/wic>

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