

Arizona Public Health Association Resolution
Folic Acid and the Prevention of Neural Tube Defects

The Arizona Public Health Association, referencing the American Public Health Association resolution number 9914; and

Recognizing that neural tube defects (NTDs) are among the most serious birth defects in the United States and that approximately 4,000 pregnancies are affected by NTDs each year; and

Noting that of approximately 60 million women of childbearing age in the United States, nearly 4 million will have a baby in a given year, and that half of these pregnancies are unintended; and

Citing that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that up to 70 percent of NTD cases could be prevented if women consumed 400 micrograms of folic acid daily for at least one month prior to conception and during the first trimester of pregnancy, and

Citing the US Public Health Service 1992 recommendation that all women capable of becoming pregnant consume 400 micrograms of folic acid to reduce NTD risk, and

Citing the Institute of Medicine Food and Nutrition Board 1998 recommendation that to reduce NTD risk, women capable of becoming pregnant should take 400 micrograms of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods, vitamin supplements, or a combination of both, in addition to consuming a varied diet, and

Recognizing the evidence that consumption of folic acid taken before conception and during early pregnancy can reduce the incidence of NTDs; and

Recognizing that facial clefts and congenital anomalies (including cardiovascular, urinary tract and limb defects) may be reduced through daily consumption of folic acid which may also improve poor pregnancy outcomes such as prematurity, low birthweight, placental abruption, spontaneous abortion, and stillbirths, and

Noting that in 1998 only one in four women of childbearing age reported that she had heard about the US Public Health Service's recommendation, and

Seeking to promote the health of women of childbearing age and to prevent their children from being born with NTDs; therefore Arizona Public Health Association

1. Supports public health campaigns that include public health education to inculcate the importance of folic acid for the health of women and infants, and professional education to encourage health care providers to recommend that female patients of childbearing potential consume a well balanced diet that includes both food and a daily multivitamin with folic acid;
2. Urges the Arizona State Government and Legislature to support such campaigns.

Passed 9/99

Erin Eyer

Resolution Chair

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