



Mega-SPA Writes Grant to Expand Teen Pregnancy Program

The SPA 5 and 6 Area Health Office has submitted a grant application to the California Chapter of the March of Dimes to expand their existing outreach to teen mothers.

South Health Center, one of two Public Health clinics in SPA 6, has hosted community baby showers for years for teen moms attending Riley High School. The activity, held every June, is financed primarily by staff fundraisers such as silent auctions, raffles, and food sales.

Although the baby showers have been successful in getting the teen mothers exposed to health education information, it became apparent that a long term intervention would be more appropriate in order to ensure that the information is being put to use and that adverse birth outcomes were being prevented. "We have been doing these events for years and

they've always been successful", said Jameelah Harris-Mims, Community Liaison for SPA 5 and 6 and one of the co-authors of the grant. "We really wanted to have a stronger impact to make sure they are really learning, which is what this program is all about".

A concerted effort was made to include SPA 5 in the proposed program, entitled **Marvelous MOMMS** (Motivating our Moms for Maternal Success). The proposal outlines plans to work with a residential home for pregnant women in the Venice area.

The proposed three month program consists of three major components: prenatal care, infant health and safety, and interconception care (the period between one child and the next). The culminating

activity will be the community baby shower.

Each component has several workshops that focus on the general theme. The mothers will be tested to make sure they have acquired knowledge and/or mastered a skill.

Notification of award will occur in January 2008.



Time to Save a Life: September is Suicide Prevention Month

According to the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), over 1 million people die by suicide each year worldwide—approximately 1 suicide every 40 seconds—and countless others make suicide attempts. Although suicide affects people from all walks of life, males are much more likely to die by suicide, while females are more likely to make suicide attempts that result in hospitalization. Some reports suggest that gay and lesbian youth are two to three times more likely to complete suicide than other youth.

Those who attempt suicide and survive are often experiencing a number of stressors and feel like they do not have the strength or desire to continue living. Many have mental disorders, like depression, which often goes undiagnosed.

As many as 80% of those contemplating suicide want others to be aware of their emotional pain and stop them from committing suicide. A warning sign does not mean a will attempt suicide, but it should be taken seriously.



Warning signs are: a prior suicide attempt, talking about suicide and making a plan, giving away prized possessions, preoccupation with death, signs of depression, hopelessness, and anxiety; and increased drug and alcohol use.

Three important things to do if there are warning signs or someone expresses desire to commit suicide are: always

show concern – listen without judgment, ask about their feelings and avoid trying to solve their problem. Next ask "are you feeling so bad that you are thinking about suicide?" Finally, if the answer is "yes" or is suspected to be yes, go get help – call a crisis line, visit the school counselor, tell a parent or refer the teen to someone with professional skills to provide help. **Knowledge of a suicide should never be kept secret!**



Suicide Prevention Week is a national event to raise awareness about suicide, including warning signs, and how to prevent it; and to celebrate the efforts of those who work to prevent suicide.

(See **Save a Life**, Page 3)

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September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

It is estimated that this year more than 16,000 women will die in the United States from ovarian cancer. Many women don't seek help until the disease has begun to spread, but if detected at its earliest stage, the five year survival rate is more than 90%.

Right now, there is no known method to prevent ovarian cancer, but some things appear to reduce a woman's risk of developing the disease. They include:

- **Oral contraception:** Birth control pills reduce the risk of ovarian cancer especially among women who use them for several years.
- **Breast feeding and pregnancy:** Having one or more children, particularly if the first is born before age 25, and breast feeding may decrease a woman's risk.
- **Tubal ligation:** This is a surgical procedure in which the fallopian tubes are tied to prevent pregnancy.
- **Hysterectomy:** A woman should not have a hysterectomy exclusively to avoid the risk of ovarian cancer, but if one is being performed for medical reasons and there is a family history of ovarian or breast cancer, or the woman is over age forty, she should discuss ovary removal with her physician.
- **Prophylactic oophorectomy:** Oophorectomy is the surgical removal of one or both ovaries. This is only recommended for certain high-risk patients.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), eating right, being active, and maintaining a healthy weight are important ways to reduce your risk of cancer as well

as other diseases. For the ACS diet and fitness tips, please visit www.cancer.org

Risk Factors

While the presence of one or more risk factors may increase a woman's chance of getting ovarian cancer, it does not necessarily mean she will get the disease. A woman with one or more risk factors should be extra vigilant in watching for early symptoms, which include:

- Genetic predisposition
- Personal or family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer
- Increasing age

Facts

- **All women are at risk**
- Symptoms exist—they can be vague, but increase over time
- Early detection increases survival rate

A Pap test **DOES NOT** detect ovarian cancer

How is Ovarian Cancer Diagnosed?

Unfortunately, most women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed with advanced-stage disease. This is because the symptoms of ovarian cancer (particularly in the early stages) often are not acute or intense, and present vaguely. The sooner ovarian cancer is found and treated, the better a woman's chance for recovery. *It is important to know that early stage symptoms are not silent – so women should be extra alert and watch out for early symptoms.*

Potential symptoms of ovarian cancer include:

- Pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort
- Vague but persistent gastrointestinal upsets such as gas, nausea and indigestion
- Frequency and/or urgency of urination in the absence of an infection
- Unexplained changes in bowel habits
- Unexplained weight gain or weight loss
- Pelvic and/or abdominal swelling, bloating and/or feeling of fullness
- Ongoing unusual fatigue

Screening Tests

Although there is no consistently-reliable screening test to detect ovarian cancer, the following tests are available:

- **Pelvic Exam:** Women age 18 and above should have an annual vaginal exam. Women age 35 and above should receive an annual rectovaginal exam (physician inserts fingers in the rectum and vagina simultaneously to feel for abnormal swelling and to detect tenderness).
- **Transvaginal Sonography:** This ultrasound, performed with a small instrument placed in the vagina, is appropriate for women at high risk for ovarian cancer
- **CA-125 Test:** This blood test determines if the level of CA-125, a protein produced by ovarian cancer cells, has increased in the blood of a woman at high risk for ovarian cancer.

For more information visit ovariancancer-awareness.org or call the American Cancer Society at

Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, it's estimated that about 178,480 women in the United States will have invasive breast cancer in 2007. About 40,460 women will die from the disease this year.

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that grows in one or both of the breasts. Breast cancer usually develops in the ducts or lobules, which are the milk producing areas of the breast. It often causes a lump in the breast(s). Other common signs of breast cancer include abnormal thickening of the breast and/or change in shape or color of the breast. Additional changes to the breast that can indicate breast cancer include:

- Changes in breast size
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin
- Swelling, redness, or warmth that doesn't go away
- Pain in one spot that doesn't change with

your monthly cycle

- Pulling in of the nipple
 - Nipple discharge that starts suddenly and appears only in one breast
 - An itchy, sore, or scaling area on one nipple
- Although finding a lump or other changes in your breast does not necessarily mean you have breast cancer, you should consult with your health professional as soon as possible. The best way to prevent breast cancer is with early detection. Women over 40 should get yearly mammograms. All sexually active women and teenagers 16 and over should examine their breasts regularly to detect lumps or abnormalities that could signal breast cancer. An exam should be done once a month, several days after the last day of a woman's period. Here are the five basic steps to a breast self-exam, courtesy of www.Breastcancer.org:



- Standing with your shoulders straight and your arms on your hips, face a mirror. Look for any differences in size, shape, color, swelling or bulging of the skin, changes in the nipple, or any signs of redness or rash
- Raise your arms, and examine your breasts for any of those differences
- Gently squeeze each nipple to check for any discharge
- Lie down and feel each breast with the hand of the opposite arm. Feel all the tissue, applying pressure to check deep tissue for any lumps or abnormalities.
- Examine the breasts while you are standing or sitting, gently examining the entire breast. You may want to try this method in the shower, while the skin is slippery.

For more information on breast cancer, visit www.breastcancer.org
For a free Breast Self-Examination shower hanger, visit www.komen.org

CA Smoker's Helpline—15 Years of Service



On August 23, 2007 the State Department of Public Health held a press conference to commemorate 15 years of the California Smokers' Helpline working hard to help smokers quit.

The event also promoted a new service offered that allows a person to go online and request to be called back regarding getting

help quitting. Visitors to the website can indicate whether they would like to be called back right away or later on and receive a phone call from a trained operator.

Representatives from the Helpline also outlined research about the effectiveness of the hotline in getting smokers to quit.

In addition, mobile billboards (shown at left with SPA 5/6 health educator Nicole Vick and SPA 8 Health Educator Ava Cato-Werhane) featuring the California Smoker's Helpline will roam around Los Angeles County encouraging people to quit smoking.

To access the California Smoker's Helpline visit: www.californiasmokershelpline.org or call 1-800-NO BUTTS.

Suicide Prevention

(*Save a Life*, from page 1)

Suicide Prevention Week is September 9-15th and coincides with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2007. This day represents a call for action and involvement by all governments and organizations worldwide to contribute to the cause of suicide awareness and prevention through activities, events, conferences and campaigns in each country. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that local mental health agencies, crisis centers, clergy, health departments, medical organizations, injury prevention agencies, schools and other community members work together to develop goals and strategies to prevent suicide.

For more information visit the AAS website at www.suicidology.org

Selected Reportable Diseases West Service Planning Area (Provisional)

Disease	1/1/2007-6/30/2007	1/1/2006-6/30/2006
AIDS		
Amebiasis	3	6
Campylobacteriosis	51	55
Chlamydial Infections	570	607
Encephalitis	0	1
Gonorrhea	198	216
Hepatitis Type A	1	25
Hepatitis Type B	2	2
Hepatitis Type C	0	2
Measles	0	0
Meningitis, Viral	3	3
Meningococcal Infections	1	1
Non-gonococcal Urethritis	54	62
Pertussis	4	6
Salmonellosis	23	35
Shigellosis	8	14
Syphilis, primary & secondary	22	24
Syphilis, early latent (<1 yr.)	16	10
Tuberculosis	11	12

How Much Do YOU Know About Ovarian Cancer?

1. There is a specific diagnostic test to determine whether or not women have ovarian cancer.
 True False
2. If a woman is diagnosed in the earliest stage of ovarian cancer, her projected five-year survival rate is over 90%?
 True False
3. Women who have had breast cancer have a higher risk of ovarian cancer. True False
4. Ovarian cancer ranks as the [x] cause of cancer-related death in women.
 3rd 5th 9th 14th
5. Half of all cases of ovarian cancer are found in women over the age of 63.
 True False
6. The following may help reduce a woman's risk of ovarian cancer.
 Taking birth control pills
 Having a hysterectomy
 Having one or more children and breast feeding for a year or longer
 All of the above
7. If there is a family history of reproductive cancers (testicular, breast, uterine, etc.) a woman is at a higher risk for ovarian cancer.
 True False

1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. 5th, 5. True, 6. All of the above, 7. True

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Chronicle 5

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