

## WELL-WOMAN CARE

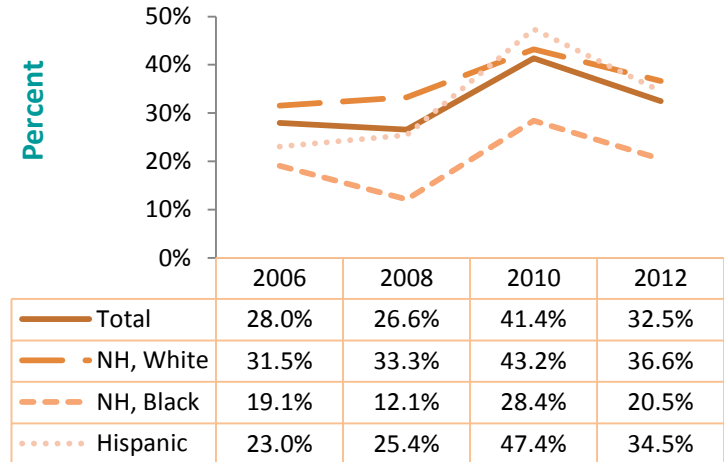
### Public Health Issue

According to Healthy People 2010, “Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for the achievement of health equity and for increasing the quality of a healthy life for everyone.”<sup>1</sup> Minority women, low-income women, and immigrant women are at particular risk for experiencing barriers to care that can lead to negative health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> A life course approach to women’s health aims to improve the health of women throughout their lives.<sup>3</sup> The risk of pregnancy-related complications and maternal/infant adverse health outcomes can be reduced by improving access to quality care before, during, and after pregnancy through consistent monitoring of health status, routine health screenings, and health education/counseling.<sup>4</sup>

### Magnitude and Trend

In 2011, approximately 44% of women in the United States aged 18-44 years did not have a routine check-up within the past year.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 1,038,881, or 32.5%, of Florida women aged 18-44 did not have a routine checkup in 2012. This percentage has not changed substantially over time since 2006. In 2012, 36.6% of non-Hispanic white women, 20.5% of non-Hispanic black women, and 34.5% of Hispanic women did not have a routine checkup in the last year (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Percentage of Women, Aged 18-44, Who Did Not Have a Check-Up in The Last Year, by Race/Ethnicity, 2006–2012, Source: BRFSS**



The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) in Florida reported that during the years 2011-2012, women with a lower income (43.9%), and women without health insurance (54.1%) were less likely to have a routine checkup.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), 20% of all Florida women who had a live born infant during 2009-2011 were obese at the beginning of their pregnancy, 58% of women did not take the recommended folic acid supplements, 9% smoked during the last three months of their pregnancy, and 7% drank alcohol.<sup>7</sup> All of these conditions could be improved by taking action on women’s health issues.

### National and State Goals

A Healthy People 2020 goal is to increase the number of women who had a routine check-up in the last year.<sup>1</sup> All women of reproductive age should have a routine checkup annually that includes preconception health. Well-woman care visits should include screening for medical history and health problems, laboratory and other tests, medical evaluation and consultation, immunizations, and preconception health counseling.<sup>8,9</sup> Preconception and interconception

health have been recognized as key factors in improving infant and maternal health outcomes.<sup>8</sup> The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) with Title V funding is offering interconception / preconception care (ICC) through the Healthy Start program to a woman who has previously been pregnant and is capable of becoming pregnant in the future who has risk factors that may lead to a poor pregnancy outcome and is also a Healthy Start prenatal client; a mother who is being provided services on behalf of her Healthy Start infant, or any non-pregnant woman who had a pregnancy and has risk factors that may lead to a poor subsequent pregnancy outcome.

The goal for Florida is that by 2018, 28% of women having a live birth will receive preconception counseling about healthy lifestyle behaviors and prevention strategies from a health care practitioner prior to pregnancy (Source: Florida Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Application and PRAMS).

### Current State Programs and Initiatives

ICC includes the following strategies directed towards improving the health of women and advancing the Well-Woman Initiative:

- Promotion of family planning for baby spacing
- Promotion and maintenance of healthy behaviors
  - Nutrition for optimal weight
  - Tobacco cessation with referral to Tobacco Free Florida's Quitline and/or Smoking Cessation Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment (SCRIPT) program
- Provide additional education information for:
  - Physical activity
  - Maternal infections
  - Chronic health problems
  - Substance abuse
    - Educate women about the dangers of using alcohol and other drugs
    - Conduct screening for substance use and abuse
    - Refer for substance abuse treatment
  - Mental health
  - Environmental risk factors

Florida is a recipient of the Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns Initiative Grant, which is a joint effort between the FDOH, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Administration on Children and Families (ACF). The aim of the initiative is to:

- Reduce preterm births and improve outcomes for newborns and pregnant women
- Reduce early elective deliveries
- Enhance prenatal care models

Although well-woman care is not directly addressed by the Strong Start grant, many of the strategies that influence the outcomes listed above are also associated with improving women's health.

### Public Health Strategies and Practices

Well woman care is about health care practitioners helping women manage their health conditions and achieve and maintain optimal health. By taking action on health issues throughout the life cycle, future problems for the mother and baby can be prevented. Well-woman care should include preconception health care education that is tailored to each woman. Several

effective preconception interventions, such as smoking and alcohol cessation, obesity control, folic acid supplementation, and some medication adjustments, take months to implement. Therefore, preconception health care must begin long before conception. The key to promoting preconception health is ensuring routine well-woman care that addresses healthy behaviors, nutritional issues, and a safe environment at home and at work.<sup>10</sup>

## DOH Capacity

In Florida, there are numerous maternal and child health organizations that help families receive the care they need to have healthier mothers, babies, and children. The FDOH is Florida's Title V agency and receives the federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Block grant funding to support, and facilitate MCH interventions, initiatives and systems of care, and care coordination in local health departments and Florida's network of Healthy Start Coalitions. In addition, at FDOH are the state's Title X Family Planning Program; Women, Infants, and Children Program (Florida WIC); Chronic Disease Prevention Program; School Health Program, Child and Adolescent Health Program and Children's Medical Services, a medical program for children with special health care needs. Together, these programs along with many other FDOH programs serve a large proportion of Florida's population (i.e., women of childbearing age, pregnant women, infants, children, adolescents and families). FDOH also provides information and guidance to practitioners and community partners on maternal and child health issues.<sup>11</sup> However, there continues to be women in need of routine women's health care services in Florida.

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