

AMCHP 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Healthy Weight in Women: The Importance of Collaboration

March 1st to 5th, 2008

BRENDA TOMPSON: Good morning. It is my privilege to stand up here representing the staff of this collaborative. Stacey did not mention that she is one of the key staff from AMCHP that's been organizing this collaborative over the past -- she joined us in the summer, but this has been a labor of love for 16 months. So we're very, very happy to be presenting all of the work of these three teams who are snapshot of the eight teams that are part of the collaborative.

The second staff from AMCHP is Sara Fahy at the front, and I have been the staff from CityMatCH.

First you should understand that this action learning collaborative is part of the Women's Health Partnership. For those of you who are not familiar with CityMatCH, we are to

urban MCH what AMCHP is to state MCH. We've worked together I think since the beginning of CityMatCH.

But the Women's Health Partnership is really the first formalized partnership between the two organizations recognizing that there are opportunities where state and local can collaborate to promote women's health before, during and after pregnancy.

The first goal of the Women's Health Partnership was to figure out how states and communities can work together to promote healthy weight. This was chosen as the first topic for several reasons. One is the link between obesity and maternal and child health outcomes; one was the amount of research and practices available that our teams could build their work upon; one was the impact of obesity. If we could actually find a way to achieve a difference in obesity, that would represent larger impact just by the number of women that are impacted by obesity.

And then we do annual membership priority assessments both at AMCHP and CityMatCH and both memberships had identified obesity and healthy weight as a priority.

This is a list of some of the average outcomes associated with maternal obesity. And in recent years -- Lois was a part of the advisory group that really laid out this foundational research, and since then even more research has come out linking maternal obesity with birth defects and also childhood obesity. So we have seen an increase in funding dedicated to combatting childhood obesity, and I don't think it's really been addressed on the national level that even when you account for socioeconomic status, education, all of the, you know, traditional variables, maternal BMI is very much linked with childhood obesity.

So to date, the Women's Health Partnership has written several papers. The first is a women's preventative health framework for maintaining a healthy weight, and then we've also written preventative women's health framework that is general, the life course perspective highlighting the prior use from a AMCHP and CityMatCH perspective and copies of that paper are down at CityMatCH booth in the exhibiter area, and if you would like any more information about those activities, you should feel free to contact Sara, Stacey or myself.

I also want to put a plug in, that the Women's Health Partnership, this healthy weight activity is really intended to be just the first activity, and we are currently in the process of

determining new directions to go in, and so as you're working in your states if you think of areas that you think, man, if I could collaborate with someone at the city or county level in urban areas in my state I want to do it around this topic or this type of activity, let us know, because that's where we are in the process, we're wrapping up, getting ready to disseminate lessons learned from this first activity, but we really want to find those areas where the most value at is possible from the state and local collaboration.

We also did an assessment of the needs and capacity areas that our members both in the state and local level needed in order to address healthy weight. And then the healthy weight action learning collaborative is by far the largest activity that we have undertaken so far.

Okay. So summer 2006. And this was actually before Sara or I even existed at AMCHP or CityMatCH but luckily we followed in the steps of very wise people who put out the RFA stating that these specific types of people needed to be on each team.

Read that list, think about those people in your state. Have you worked with every single one of them before, on one team? None of our teams had. We were very purposeful in this selection because this a big topic, obesity, chronic disease, nutrition, physical

activity, MCH. Every single one of those is someone with a very specific round of expertise that was going to be needed to be present on each team.

So even though you all hadn't worked together, we told you to come together in December and a lot of time was necessary to form those partnerships and talk about where was the greatest need in your state, where was the greatest need in your community, how are we going to combine our expertise and do something about it?

Eight teams were selected. And we kicked off in October 2006. Our first meeting in December was all about team building. Like I said, having that dialogue about what should the priority be, what are we going to do about it? They started making action plans, determining strategies for impact, and at our second meeting in June, we gave them some of the resources they might need to implement those plans.

Then we've had a series of technical assistance calls and our final meeting was actually just held on Thursday and Friday. And you have the three members from three different the teams here to present to you today, and I really want to point out that as the coordinators and staff of this project, we didn't say we are ending the collaborative in

winter, spring of '08 and by that time you need to have developed a program, implemented it and we want results.

No, we wanted effective, change that could be sustainable across the systems of chronic disease and MCH in these communities.

So they have laid the groundwork for that change.

Some of them have begun implementation, you'll hear about that, some of them are just getting ready to begin implementation. They have developed evaluation plans and as the staff we will work on disseminating all of their lessons learned and recommendations and you'll be able to find those on AMCHP and CityMatCH Websites.