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Moving Ahead Together:

Celebrating the Legacy, Shaping the Future of Maternal and Child Health

Innovative Communication Strategies to Promote Preconception Health

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SUE HUFFMAN: In September, 2008, Nebraska received the First Time Motherhood, New Parents Initiative Award through MCHB and HRSA. Our model that we used for our grant application was based on the life course approach to pre and interconception health and the research that was done by Mr. Halfon, Dr. Lou, and Don Misera.

One of our two goals for this initiative is to increase the awareness among women ages 16 to 25 of the benefits of life course approach to pre and interconception health. And so my presentation is focused on this one goal.

How we were going to do it was an information campaign for women and men that will help them prepare for their future roles as parents. Our first step was to select a social marketing contractor through a competitive bid process and then complete extensive market research. The purpose of the research was to assess general lifestyle practices, media consumption habits, and health and life

planning perspectives of Nebraska women 16 to 25, who have no health insurance, or at risk of being uninsured.

We needed to understand the lifestyle and media habits of these young women in order to execute the selected strategy later in our initiative so it would have a big impact.

The methodology for our market research, it was a qualitative approach. The timeframe for collecting this data was March through May of last year, and the participants included 12 one-on-one professional interviews, and 24 total focus groups.

The professionals that provided direct services to our target audience came back and said to us, “These young women are juggling multiple priorities. They don’t think they need to deal with health today, that’s something they’ll deal with later. Having a life plan and having a baby didn’t go hand in hand with them. They needed help with interpersonal skills and step-by-step goal setting, and digital was an emerging medium for them.” These professionals said, what doesn’t work for them with this target audience is handing out brochures. One professional said, “I could hand out brochures til I’m blue in the face and it wouldn’t make any difference.” They don’t need to be lectured to, and the other thing is, they don’t open mail. So, they may get snail mail, but they don’t open it.

There were 24 total focus groups. The focus groups took an hour and a-half each. There were 20 female focus groups, including two Native American, four Hispanic, and two African-American. Of the four Hispanic focus groups of young women, only two of them were in Spanish. We found in our state that if young women attended school and were speaking English, they felt more comfortable speaking English because they had acculturated to our state.

There were four male focus groups, including one Hispanic. And the reason we had male focus groups is because we knew that the young males influenced these young women.

The focus group participants completed media and lifestyle workbooks. We had 201 women in the female focus groups, and 33 males. The focus groups were actually three-part. The first part, the young women were asked to look at a poster of magazine pictures of women of all walks of life. And then they identified which woman, or which women they felt were healthy. Secondly, they completed like a workbook on their own, and this was to get their thought thinking about life course health development and the way they receive, or prefer to receive, communication messages. It also was kind of an ice breaker. And then our researchers, our social market contractors delved into the actual questions.

And our findings: First of all, the focus groups of young women, we knew a 16-year old is very different than a 25-year old, so our focus groups were 16 to 21,

and then 20 to 25 years old. First of all, being healthy isn't easy. The world has a lot of temptations, stress, and a lot of bad role models. It's a lot easier to go through the fast food drive-in window and not exercise. Second, thoughts about the future often are not well-defined. The road is missing. The future for them means, just waiting to see what happens. Third, participants experienced stress in all areas of their lives. They're stressed to meet expectations and some of their stressors are totally out of their control.

The biggest stressors of our target audience was, no money, balancing life, relationship and family stress, job and transition. Leave, setting, achieving goals was the most important skill to achieve success. One young woman wrote her goals on a bathroom mirror so she could see them every morning when she got ready for school, and then she could erase them and set new goals.

For information about their health concerns, the first place young women turned to was the internet, and they go to WebMD, or they type in their symptoms on Google and Google it.

As far as preconception health, they thought you start a preconception health when you got pregnant, engaged, or got married. It was not realistic for them to think about this, "I need to take care of myself now because I may have a baby in the future." And one young woman remarked, "Well, preconception for her was dating someone who would make a good father."

For the young men, their reactions to these questions weren't all that different. But they did feel like the young women in their lives were too concerned about their appearances and one young man also said, "They have more drama in their lives than anybody should have."

Communication considerations: The audience was diverse and uninformed. There is a need for mass exposure in multiple forms, social networks, and peer support and information sources. Thought social networks or social networking is very important to them right now. To provide a destination to foster communication, house resources, allow information sharing. And we thought a website would best suit that demand. Online tools would be effective and create personalized tools to facilitate education and interaction.

Traditional media still works, or is still viable, TV and radio with our audience. Ninety percent own a cell phone and text with it. Ninety percent of the male and female focus group participants claim they had an internet access at home. And we found out that even if they didn't have internet access at home, or a computer, if they want to find it, they'll go find a computer and access it. Eighty percent emailed, and more than 60% used Facebook and My Space. Facebook seemed to be more popular in the rural areas, and My Space was more popular in the rural areas. I'm sorry, I meant, urban for Facebook, My Space for rural. And 50% watch videos online.

So, why did we come up with this music creative concept? Well, last June, a stakeholder even was held regarding this project. All of the market research was presented by the contractor and seven creative concepts. They provided input, what they thought would be the best suited for the target population based on the research. We debriefed back at Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and then my supervisor then presented some ideas to our director. Music does play an important role in young lives and it can be used to effectively empower young women. In Erin Michelle's video that I just showed you, she was talking about the warrior, or empowering young women.

Music's also stood the test of time. My parents listened to music, I listened to music growing up and now my son does. It's just different kinds of music. Music has the potential to speak to young people in a way to inspire change, and that's what we want them to do. We want to empower them to take the controls of their lives and their futures. The time to take control of their lives and their relationships is now, and we needed to get the target audience's attention. We didn't want to lecture to them again. So, we wanted to strike an emotional connection.

So, now what is TUNE? TUNE is a movement about self-adjustment and self-awareness. This creative concept came from; there are a couple of online movements right now on the internet. One called To Write Love on Her Arms. It

started on Facebook. A young woman was contemplating suicide and someone intercepted, and now they actually have a kind of non-profit on the internet to prevent suicide. Just as an instrument was never to be played out of tune, our lives and our bodies were never meant to be either. TUNE aims to push young people to find balance, embrace good habits, and tune their lives accordingly.

A couple of other terms we were presented with is Tempo and EQ. TUNE just resonated, we didn't want a long tag line, and so the one word is going to be our tagline, or name for this project, or initiative.

So, we had a song writing contest last November. And what was instrumental in our song writing contest, why it was so successful, our social marketing contractor had someone who had worked for them. He had written songs and then traveled with a band nationwide for eight years. So, Scott was our link to the music world and he knew how he could advertise the song contest, he knew amateur artists, that's what we wanted, and to get original lyrics. So, the lyrical concepts were kind of based on what young women were needing about life course health development; self-confidence, change, dreams, and goals, character, and determination. So, their songs had to have some of these, not all of them, but some of these concepts.

We had over 150 entries. This was our first music contest. And it wasn't limited to just Nebraska. We had entries from as far away as Canada and Australia. And

the young woman I showed you, Erin Michelle, she is actually from Dallas, Texas, and she paid her own way to come to our state to get recorded.

Our guy that had been in the music world said, "Let's do posters." Posters are still pretty traditional media, so you can see what the poster looked like. It was an empty CD case, and it said, "We need music. TUNE the song writing contest." And you would be getting \$500 if you were the winner and we professionally produced your song in a video, the inspiration behind the song. And we also used TuneMyLife.org, a website we set up to advertise the contest and then it linked to Facebook and My space. We have about three radio stations that the target audience listens to in Nebraska. One in Omaha, one in Lincoln, and one in our Tri-City area in the middle of the state, Grand Island, Carney, and Hastings. And these DJ's bought into our idea and in Lincoln, Matt gave us free radio time. And he's still pushing for this project and this movement.

In order to reduce the 150 entries down to the eight that we produced, first of all, we had a technical panel. We had two young men from a recording studio in Lincoln, and then the young man who had been a part of the musical group. They listened to all 150 entries and looked at the lyrics and listened to their music if it would be really something they could work with in the studio.

There were 32 then, choices that were narrowed down and presented to our professional panel. The professional panel was people from our social marketing

agency, people from our health agency, and we narrowed this list down to 13. The 13 songs and lyrics then were taken to diverse focus groups – three focus groups across our state; Omaha, Lincoln, and then kind of our Tri-City area. And with all of this input then we got back together with the marketing agency and narrowed it to eight winners. And these eight winners then had their music produced professionally and videos were taped of them while they were producing their music. They were telling us the inspiration about their song. Was it someone in their lives, was it there personal experience, and it's been pretty touching these stories that came through.

So, TuneMyLife.org: We're beginning website development. So, we're using the music to hook young women in as the target audience and then this is going to be somewhere they can go to get more information. And this, I had mentioned before, we used this website for the song writing contest too. It's really challenging to hook them in and have them start thinking about their own lives and to hook educational messages and musical productions together. We're working on that challenge and we still have a lot of dialogue to do.

We want to move the audience into five topic areas that resulted from the focus groups and the market research, health, emotional wellbeing, friends and family, dating, and education. From these five topic areas, we hope that they will start asking questions about themselves and dive deeper into other links that we can guide them on reproductive life plans, tobacco cessation, finding the needed help

and resources they need. Also, this last week, we put in our application to trademark the phrase, "Tune my Life." So, that's why the TM is there. And Tune up there is going to have piano key on the 'E'. We're going to soon be trade marking our logo.

So where do we go from here with some of these great ideas and products that have been developed? Just this last week, we awarded our promotional campaign contract that we had bids through a competitive bidding process again. And part of our promotional campaign, of course, will be the eight musical videos, the website TuneMyLife.org. we'll have links from the website to Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace. So young women and young men have a place to share their thoughts and feelings, to start discussions, maybe post their own videos and messages.

Spokes persons for this project, or initiative e will be primarily our eight artists that were the winners from the contest. And then they will have on air interviews, concerts and events and travel across the state. We're trying to work with their schedules now because they do go to school and they do have their own events.

We do have someone that's nationally known that is going to help kick off the event. It's a member of the band, Maroon 5, James Valentine. He's a Lincoln native, he went to Southeast High School there, and he likes to give back to his community and Nebraska. So, he'll be starting a huge tour with the net CD in

May, but he has agreed to do a video tape of the inspiration behind him becoming a musician and then to do some local interviews on the radio stations.

Our launch is April 25. And to kick it off is going to be Husker Sunday, what else would you call it in Nebraska, and we're collaborating with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. This is a recruiting event for them. It will be in Lincoln, it's going to be at one of our shopping malls and it will draw young people in within a 90-mile radius of Lincoln, and we should have around 2,500 young people there that day. We'll have the local – the artists that were selected, we want them to perform, we'll be handing out some information about our website and so forth. Then there are events that are going to be planned across the state for the next 12 months.

The media plan: Well, that's going to be some of the traditional media yet too besides Facebook and the website. The three radio stations are still going to help us do interviews with the artists and promote their music, our website, and our initiative. We're going to use local newspapers and posters, again. And then this fall, we're going to have a new song writing contest again. We found funds to have another song writing contest, and whereas the first one, we didn't draw in as many culturally diverse groups and artists as we had hoped to, we're really going to work on that this time and try to achieve that through this song writing contest.

So this is just starting out the promotional campaign, so we'll see where it takes us from here.

Thank you.

FACILITATOR: Thanks Sue, and next we're going to hear from Cara.

CARA: All right. Well good afternoon everybody, I'm Cara Sherman from Louisiana, I live in New Orleans, fun city, and I wanted to tell you a little bit about a preconception health campaign that we are doing there called The Stork Reality, and it is actually part of the Partners for Healthy Babies Project, which is run out of the Maternal Child Health Program to basically promote prenatal care, healthy behaviors during pregnancy. This is a program that was actually begun in 1993, this Partners for Healthy Babies Project, and we want to be a social marketing project, but social marketing is a little tough to implement when you're thinking about what is your product and all those kinds of things. So, we do some of that, but mostly we've become a multi-media health communication program with Partners for Healthy Babies and initiated in 1993 in response to, of course, the very high infant mortality and low birth weight in Louisiana, high teen pregnancy rate, etc. And one thing I can tell you and report on is great news for Louisiana, is that through this program and some other efforts connected to the program, we moved rapidly up the scales to becoming the sixth best in the nation for early entry into prenatal care through, in part, due to this program. But, the

last bullet here as you can see, infant mortality, low birth weight, no change.

Okay? No big news in a sense, but this really got us thinking in terms of what is it that we need to do differently, what is it we need to do next.

So, our planners or NCH stakeholders had a strategic planning in March, 2008, and kind of came together around a lot of this research on preconception health and the importance of recognizing that nine months of prenatal care is not going to fix a lifetime worth of problems of stress and poor lifestyles, etc. So, we basically then, the preconception health campaign was born, or at least the idea for it was born and we, of course, as good health education people went right into the literature review to see what do we know so far, and not surprisingly, in Louisiana, 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned, and unhealthy behaviors prior to conception by both the mother and father have a significant impact on the health of the baby and, of course what was interesting here is that men and women planning pregnancy are more likely to actually practice healthy lifestyles and healthy behaviors and seek the advice of medical professionals. But those women and men not planning a pregnancy were not seeking these kinds of behavior changes or aware of preconception health and the importance of it.

So, we did a creative brief to start things out with to see where we are and where are we going, and we basically the communication goal for this project then became to make sure that the importance of general healthy behavior was understood by our target audience and especially for the potential birth of a baby.

And again, 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned. So, the odds of accidental or unplanned pregnancy are high, so it's important to be healthy, just in case.

The audience that we selected was males and females between the ages of 18 and 34 in Louisiana, skewed a little bit towards the younger group and the more female group. But the most important thing here is that we are looking for people who are not actively trying to get pregnant.

So, the current perception of this audience, again from literature review and from data that was available to us, is since they are not actively trying to have a baby, they are not thinking of preconception health; therefore messages about preconception health will not catch their attention. And portions of this audience are more likely to smoke, drink, eat poorly, not exercise, and not know the importance of taking folic acid, and therefore making an unplanned pregnancy even more "dangerous." So, again, most men and women are not aware that 50% of pregnancies aren't planned and many are not practicing proper birth control methods.

So, the challenge for us; how do you reach an audience that does not believe that they are your audience? You know, when we looked around and looked at what other campaigns were doing to address this, we found very little that really handled this issue and this problem. Canada did have some interesting things that we looked at and so we kind of sneaked a peak of what they were working

on and had gotten some ideas from them. But the answer in a way is to stand out, speak their language, and to be unexpected, you know, catch their attention.

So, the next step was then to craft a multi-faceted communication project using various tactics and I will introduce these tactics to you briefly, but one of the stars of our project is a seven-foot stork named Sammy. And he basically is played by an actor and he travels around the state and he makes public appearances and talks about the importance of preconception health in a very unexpected fashion. I will introduce him to you in a minute, and he drives people to a website, a mini-website that is loaded up with pictures and videos of him interacting with the target audience. And this mini-website also has information about preconception health on there and is viral in nature so that people who visit the website, it's very easy to upload the videos and pictures and send them on to friends, there's a social media component to this project that, you know, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, again on the mini-website you are linked to those areas.

In conjunction with Sammy, he sometimes goes out with a flock and that is our street team, and I'll show those to you in a minute too, and these are kind of party girls who basically go out into the clubs and bars around Louisiana and help promote this message that we're trying to get at. We have in-bar ad placement, this is paid advertising in the bars around the state of Louisiana along with TV and radio spots and interactive web ad placements. So, I'll present all of these to you.

This next slide doesn't tell you much information, right? But what it is telling you is that it is important for us – all of these tactics, making sure that we are keeping an eye on how we are tracking and evaluating the tactics so that the execution part is really the qualitative assurance, are things going as planned, the metrics. We capture metrics where we can in terms of number reached, frequency of message, distribution, etc. And then impact of course, are we making a difference, are we moving the needle anywhere. So, as I go through some of these slides, you'll see that we are looking at some of these things.

So, let me introduce you to Sammy. He is a seven-foot stork, as I mentioned, and he is played by a professional performer, so we hired an actor that was not quite as easy as you think to find someone who really, you know, was the right ****. So we had to go through an interesting process there. And as I mentioned, he does appear with a street team on occasion. He's featured on the website, on radio spots, and in the TV spot that we've produced so far.

So these are a few pictures where you can see him out in public, and he's gone to a grocer store and asked for folic acid from the cash register lady, you see him waiting at a bus stop down here in the corner; he's at a bar here; just kind of walking around. Here he is again; he actually went through a drive through, and you can see him driving in a car right here, and that was a hard feat to accomplish, believe me. It's a small car. And he did ask for folic acid and got

quite a few – like what are you doing? So, it was quite interesting. You can get kind of an idea of what he looks like and who he is.

This is the mini-website, or at least a snapshot of it, so to speak, to give you a little feel of what that looks like. And again, we upload videos ongoingly and I'd like to share with you one of them just again for you to get the spirit of this whole thing. So, this is

[Video]

Guys, I've been so busy this week. It's been, yeah, okay. I'm complaining about work again. All right, you're right, I always talk about work. I'm sorry. No, we've just been really busy at the office. You know that 50% of pregnancies are unplanned? Yeah. So, think about me. I'm flying here, I'm flying there. And then once I get there, you don't have to tell women and men the importance of taking care of yourself before you get pregnant, even while you're pregnant. It's just as important. So, I'm doing it all. I'm delivering the baby, telling them about the importance of exercise, talking about the importance of eating fresh vegetables and fruits, talking about multi-vitamins, talking about folic acid. I'm not getting a raise, I'm just doing this out of the goodness of my heart, you know. I want a little appreciation, you know? Yeah, yeah. I've talked about work enough. I'll talk to you guys later.

[End Video]

Okay, I'll share one more with you.

[Video]

Well, I'm just sitting here, I just got off work. It was really busy, as you know, 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned. So I got my work cut out for me. But luckily we're also getting the word out to women that it's very important to stay healthy even before they get pregnant. You know, what with diet, exercise, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco. Yeah. I'm about – I'm probably going to get a salad, so – yeah, meet me here in 15. Bye.

[End Video]

Okay. So there's Sammy. If you come to Louisiana, you have to be on the watch out for him. Okay. So, in terms of the website, so far, the campaign started around September, and we've had 9,300 page views, with about 6,000 unique visitors to the website. Here's some Google analytics that I can share with you, just to show you that we're tracking this kind of stuff. We also, as I mentioned have a social media component where he's on Facebook, and we keep that up on a schedule. We know what our topics are going to be and what we talk about. The Twitter site is there as well. And again, that's on a schedule too with topics

that we address. And we've included MySpace as well more recently into the project, and we're followers on Twitter, 253, 352 friends and fans on Facebook, 89 on MySpace. And this is where we get a little bit more excited here when we have the retweets, so ultimately we can say that 370,000 people have seen retweeted message, you know, when they send them out to their friends and followers, etc. So, this is something again we're keeping an eye on.

Next, the in-bar ads. We made arrangements with 97 bars across Louisiana, and these are paid kind of negotiations so we can make sure that the advertisements are actually placed where we want them, when we want them for as long a we want them and these are posters that are actually hung in the women's restroom, and we have the same kind of poster in the men's restroom, a little bit different language, but mostly the same. We've got mirror clings, and the good news on these, these are little like magnet-type things that get stuck on the mirrors in the bathrooms. The good news on these is they kept getting stolen. So, we were happy that people kind of liked this. And then we have posters as well, again with the same theme and same messages.

These are a few pictures just to give you a flavor of what it looked like when they were actually hanging in the establishments. I'm just going to kind of flip through these quickly again just to get you a little exposure.

There were three radio spots we developed, they were each 15 seconds long and featured Sammy the Stork with basically driving people to the mini-website. And we ran those through seven markets in Louisiana and we captured the frequency and – you don't have to look at this chart really, but just again to know that we are really looking at how we are reaching our audiences and what areas, etc.

We did a TV spot that ran in the beginning of January for two weeks, again, throughout the markets in Louisiana. We made sure we chose a variety of networks that would appeal to again, the younger audiences and it was a 30-second spot that was taken from one of the website videos.

Interactive ads: We purchased some ads, some banner ads, and placed them onto different sites in the web world, and a lot of these were entertainment-type sites, and made sure that we captured the click through rates of these pieces of strategies. So this is one on a cross-word puzzle, but again a lot on the Playlist.com website here. You can see the different. And these are the numbers and impressions that we were able to capture. Basically, an impression, if you don't know is how many times someone might have seen it, but then you actually have to click on the ad to go to the website and that translated into about 5,700 click throughs for that time period.

We also did a paid search for optimizing search engine words. And so we purchased several words. Many of them that were corresponding to the idea of preconception health; so pregnancy, and motherhood, and that kind of thing, but the most successful words were actually the antonym words, these are words such as partying and alcohol and so we wanted to make sure that we were in the opposite direction and had a presence there with these kinds of words. And again, you can kind of see, this is a search on “alcohol” and on the right hand corner, it’s kind of hard to see, but we come up at the StorkReality.com website under alcohol.

And this is just a summary, again of the click rate. And I’m told that this is a fairly reasonable click rate. This is what to expect, so it’s not anything that’s – to me it sounded like, oh my gosh, this is not a really big number, but it’s actually a reasonable number for click rates. So, we got about 10,000 impressions with Goggle and the value clip kind of interactive media.

The street team: Again, this is the party girls that I referred to, and these we contracted with the Do It Outdoors Company. So these were girls who actually most often went out to help sell shots of alcohol and things like that for different companies. And so they were very excited and interested to have a different kind of a role and so we did a training with the girls and one thing that mattered a lot was to have a consistent team manager across the market so they could help supervise the outreach. So, in each market they had about four to five street

team members that went out. And I think pictures will help show more of the reality of things. But they had about 140 site visits. They went to things like homecoming games, to festivals, to bars, to even a gun show, which I was shocked that that made it on the list, but was the most popular event in one of the areas in our state for young and old, so it was the place to be.

We distributed approximately 15,000 postcards and they are there on the seats with you, the postcards we distributed. And 1,500 t-shirts went out as well. These are your t-shirts. Very popular, very cool. American Apparel, worked very well. So, these really became a hot commodity. And these are the handouts. And then these are some pictures of the street team going out and about and interacting with people in the bars. This was at a game. Another game, different cities. This was at the Gumbo Festival in Louisiana, in Thibodaux. So, again just to give you some impressions.

One thing that we did as well was we asked them to collect quotes from people they were interacting with, and so we have books and books of this kind of stuff. I wanted to just put forth a few just to kind of show you that this was really, really well received by the people that they interacted with.

One is, "Oh my god. I heard about this program on the radio. This is so cool to see it in action. You guys are awesome. Are you hiring?" Here's another one from Baton Rouge. "I'm shocked you are here in this bar giving out serious

information and free t-shirts about something that personally touches my heart. I have a son with spinal bifida. You have certainly done your research and folic acid is extremely important. I wish the moment happened three years ago before I got pregnant because I would have listened and my son may not have had this. You're making me cry. I'm sorry, I'm really touched." And then this last line. "It's different, I mean, look around. Everyone loves you guys and they put the t-shirts on right away. It's awesome." "This information is easy to digest. I usually don't like people randomly handing out information, but you guys are so cool and the information is needed."

So, all positive stuff. "I love that you guys are not shoving it down our throats. Usually it's the churches out her preaching." It was definitely a different kind of tactic. It did matter though that we had these party girls on board. We had cool people doing this for us. "You guys should go to other states..." hint, hint. "I understand that the program is state run, but everyone needs to hear this in the manner in which you're delivering it." So, I have gobs of these audience quotes.

In order to help assess some of the impact that we've had, and this is only the beginning of doing that, we also conducted a pre and a post test. The pre test of course prior to the campaign being initiated in early September, and then a post test was just recently done and finished in January. We had 413 survey respondents to both the pre and the post test, so 826 altogether. And we went to the bars statewide to do this. And a few highlights of this pre-post test kind of

research was that, the post test showed that unprompted awareness of advertising is high. So, 56% of the respondents had heard about the campaign. The recall was good, over 1/3 of campaign messages. The most important or the most well-remembered being that 50% of all pregnancies are not planned being at an 89% recall rate there. The advertising they thought was believable, meaningful, likeable, memorable, 72% said they were likely or very likely to share these messages with others, and while over two-thirds say they are likely to practice most health behaviors, there's still room for improvement. In the areas especially of the taking a multi-vitamin did not score very highly in this and also reducing stress. The idea of figuring out a way to reduce stress. And then another area of course, we had 7% in the post test said that they would not practice any of these health behaviors, it didn't matter, they didn't seem influenced. So, we still have our work cut out for us.

So, what's up next? In terms of monitoring and evaluation, we really need to assess the implications of the pre-post test and some of these tracking kinds of studies and the data that we're seeing. We need to refine and revise our strategies, our tactics. We're looking at being more audience segmented to make sure that we are really looking at those audiences where the disparities are the highest. And so that has implications for some of the strategies and for some of the messaging that we do. And we are, with the non-paid portion of things, we are having an extension campaign where we are going into areas of the state in an active manner to engage partners to help us distribute this message without

actually paying for in-bar advertising and things like that. Right now, the two places are Goodwill stores and libraries that are on board with us. Libraries especially where there are computers, that's where we'll be placed.

And then we have this more of a passive approach. Anyone who wants to help with the distribution of our materials, our t-shirts, etc, they can let us know and we will be happy to bring them onboard with us.

The social media portion is of course free. It runs itself, in a sense that way. But we are going to be focusing a lot more on figuring out which friends to recruit and how friends and followers that we are going after a lot have to do with clubs and bands and entertainment industry and that kind of thing even though we have a lot of other kinds of groups that we reach out to, including schools and parenting groups, etc.

And we are also having conversations about how do we really evaluate social media, how do we really evaluate this whole project for impact. So, we are planning to do another, for lack of a better word right now, but just to kind of get it into your mind, another benchmark study that actually beyond the prenatal care and the healthy behaviors include preconception health things that are beyond what Prams information and other information offers us. So, that is kind of the next step for us so that we can continue in the later part of this year when we

have some additional dollars coming in to keep Sammy alive out there in Louisiana so he can keep visiting people.

So, you can follow Sammy, you can see what he's up to, what his antics are up to on Facebook, on MySpace and on Twitter and if you need to get in touch with me because you are interested and want to hear more about it, I mean, there's definitely way to get in touch with me as well, and I have a card up there, so please feel free to come and chat with me more about this. So, thanks. That's it.

FACILITATOR: And now we'll have our final speaker, Tonya.

TONYA GORHAM: Good afternoon. I'm Tonya Gorham, as she mentioned. I am the Director of Policy with the LA Best Babies Network. And I'm here to share with you the information on "How Healthy Are You?" project that we did to integrate preconception health messages in the workplace. And I've shared the "How Healthy Are You?" score card on your chairs, and my PowerPoint presentation is in the back if you'd like a copy of that as well.

Just first as way of background. As you all know, the CDC came up for recommendations for preconception health, and one of the recommendations was that individual's responsibility across the life span and encouraging women, men, and couples to have a reproductive life plan. They also encouraged consumer awareness, so increasing public awareness of the importance of

preconception health behaviors and preconception care services by using information tools across various ages, literacy including health literacy, cultural linguistic context. There's more on the CDC recommendation in terms of using tools, and then also evaluating these tools; developing them and evaluating them. And so with those recommendations, in Los Angeles, we have a preconception health collaborative. That means a group of partners has been together since about 2006 we formed and our partners include, our organization, LA Best Babies Network, the LA County Department of Public Health, The Child and Adolescent Health Programs, the March of Dimes, Los Angeles Area, PHFD WIC, which is one of the major WIC organizations in the Los Angeles area, and the California Family Health Council which does our family planning program throughout California.

The LA Best Babies Network, my organization, is part of the collaborative and we coordinate the Healthy Birth Initiative for First Five LA. First Five LA is a county commission. There are different county commissions throughout the state of California that started from Prop10 funding, which was a tax on tobacco about 12 years ago, that was passed. And the funding is dedicated to serving children zero to five, we coordinate for the First Five LA, we coordinate the zero part, the prenatal part of their efforts. And part of the healthy birth initiatives include policy and advocacy and includes community building, health education and messaging, social support, quality improvement programs and also integrative preconception and end of conception care and health messages. One major component, which

I'm not going to talk about as much here is, we have what's called Best Baby Collaboratives throughout the county and they're actually doing a direct service and they're actually integrating preconception care into their, really innerconception care and following women for two years post-partum into their practice.

So, as part of the collaborative, the network developed a How Healthy Are You? scorecard which was meant as kind of a quiz for women to start to think about their preconception health. And it includes a health education messages with all of the questions. I'm going to go over the questions, but it includes health education messages, and it's also coupled with a website for the women as well. And so, this is a copy of the brochure, it is in Spanish and English.

And then the questions include questions like, do you eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables? Do you exercise three to five times a week? Do you see your dentist once a year? Do you go to the doctor at least once a year for check ups? Do you take a multi-vitamin? Do you have a safe place to stay? Do you smoke? Are you, or someone around you, exposed to chemicals at home and at work? I really was trying to get to all aspects of preconception health. One of the questions that we didn't get into the questions was the question on alcohol and drugs, which was – we had to kind of narrow it down to ten, but we do have that information on the website. So, each of these questions has corresponding kind

of paragraphs within the scorecard to give them more background about that particular issue, as well, as I said, the websites.

Once a woman scores herself, for each 'yes' answer, she receives she gets one point, and so for all the 'no' answers she gets zero points. So, the goal is to get 10 points. And at 10 points she's told, congratulations, you made a commitment to your health, keep focusing on exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet, and getting the healthcare you need. And then it goes down from there to zero to 2 points is, your lifestyle is unhealthy, your healthcare provider can help you to identify ways to help you take care of yourself and live the healthy life you deserve. And so, it really – and it also comes with resources and information on the website and in different workshops that we've conducted. We provide women with resources and information for getting more assistance if they desire.

This is a copy of the front page of the website we have. It's called our mom's website, www.LABestBabies/moms, or /Madres, for the Spanish one. So, the How Do You Score? Card, it was focus group tested by women at WIC sites, our communications team in our organization partnered with the WIC sites to focus test among Spanish speakers and English speakers, I believe there were three focus groups conducted to kind of get the feedback on it in terms of the literacy, in terms of the look, they kind of looked at the pictures and just all of the things that went into the score card.

We also did a focus group, or a few focus groups through the California Family Health Council with family planning clinic staffs. So we had clinic staff come into the focus groups and look at the scorecard and learn about it and really discuss how effective it would be in terms of working with their clients within the clinics. So, we did all of this before we took it into the workplace just to get the feedback on it that we wanted.

Then in terms of the workplace, we contracted with an organization called Workplace Wellness La. And it's a non-profit agency that's focused on preventive health education to low wage workers. And Worksite Wellness LA, I'll refer to them as WWWLA, they developed a curriculum around the How Healthy Are You? scorecards. So they used our websites, they used the score card, also other information that they had from previous workshops that they had done, they developed the curriculum around the scorecard itself and the curriculum was called Healthy Women, well it was called Muhair Sauna[sp] because it was going to be conducted in Spanish.

And so, why the workplace? We had been working on kind of trying to work with employers to develop family-friendly, and pregnancy-friendly work place policies over the past few years. And so we really took an interest in working with employers. Our organization is housed – our office is housed at the LA Chamber of Commerce in downtown Los Angeles which is a unique place to have a non-profit organization. And so we have a lot of contact with employers and employer

sites in Los Angeles. So, in terms of going into the workplace, we knew that's where the women were.

In Los Angeles, women make up 44% of the county's workforce, 56% of women over age 16 are in the workforce in Los Angeles. And 60% of all women with children are in the workforce with higher rates for those with older children. The rates of single mothers who are working has surged to about 72%, I believe. I think it's about the same now as well. So, we know to reach women, you kind of have to go where they are, I'm a social worker and that's the first lesson you learn is start where the client is and that's what we wanted to do. We wanted to go to where the women were.

And so, again, the workplace we also know that prevention strategy, such as work site wellness programs are beneficial to women and to their families as well as to their employer as the employers really do see a cost savings when they implement worksite wellness programs.

And I should tell you a little bit – oh yes, this is the slide. The Muhair Sana program, the healthy women program, which was developed by Work Site One LA with the goal of developing workshops using a curriculum and to deliver these workshops at a American Apparel, which is a garment manufacturing company, that was mentioned earlier, and they're based in downtown Los Angeles, they have a huge pink manufacturing building in downtown LA. They have about

4,000 employees in that one facility. And the Work Site One is an organization, Work Site One is La already had a relationship with American apparel, and I should say too that American Apparel, they had already implemented a lot of kind of healthy workplace strategies – policies, so they have for example, they have a huge lunch area and they have healthy options vending machine in place already on their work site. They have a health room, where they can go in and they have the exercise balls and they did exercise classes there. They have a worksite wellness coordinator, who I think left recently, but she was very energetic and really go the employees to do exercise during their breaks. They have a clinic that they just opened about a year ago on site there for their employees to use as well. It is a beautiful, beautiful clinic that they opened there. So, it's a very interesting and kind of progressive organization in that sense.

There are arguments to be made in terms of wages and insurance coverage and things like that, but they seem to have taken an interest in providing that work place wellness for their employees. So, the objective was that by June, 2009, increase awareness of preconception health among women in the workplace by providing these educational presentations on the importance of good nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and healthcare for women of childbearing age.

So, just in terms of the overview, again, our target was women of childbearing age, age 18 to 44 at American Apparel, part of the project was, we included incentives to try to get the women to participate in the program so we provided

throughout the project, I will show you where we gave them in a minute, but we provided two \$25 grocery store gift cards to each woman that participated, and they had to go to certain levels in order to receive the incentives.

Outreach and education, presentations that were going to be conducted during the lunch period. So because it is such a big workplace, they have several lunch shifts, and they are about 30 minute lunch breaks. And so we provided the work shops back to back and there were usually four per day that were provided because one shift would come in and then another shift would come in and they would receive the workshop and information.

The recruitment goal was 120, not 20. The recruitment goal was 120 to reach these women, Worksite Wellness conducted outreach at American Apparel a few weeks before the actual workshops. So they went there during the lunch periods and had sign up tables, had posters, had information and flyers for the women in Spanish to get them to sign up for it. And ultimately they signed up about 126 women in the preregistration, and women were very enthusiastic and then women were able to call them and call them they wanted to participate if they didn't sign up in person. They were able to call them and tell them they wanted to participate if they heard about it through a co-worker.

Worksite One has conducted five workshops, so it went over a series of five weeks, so every Monday for five weeks, they did four workshops. If that makes

sense. They did four workshops every Monday for five weeks. The first workshop was on an introduction to preconception health. The women completed the How Healthy Are You? scorecard during that and then they also did a pre-survey on kind of their knowledge about preconception health just to see what information they knew about to begin with. We didn't use the word preconception health, I should say also. We try not to use that word.

The second workshop and second Monday was on the importance of good nutrition, they were provided with goodie bags and giveaways during that one. And I'm sorry, during the first session, in order to receive the first gift card, they had to complete the scorecard and score themselves and also do the pre-test.

This third workshop was on physical activity, and they include giveaways of pedometers and how to use pedometers. The fourth one was on mental health, and it also included other things like alcohol and substance abuse, smoking, domestic violence, and depression. And that one actually probably had the most interest. And I think our facilitators were surprised by that. The women were very interested in that particular workshop. And then the fifth session was completing the post-survey as well as completing their healthy life plan.

Let's see... the healthy life plan that they developed was kind of a triplicate form with these seven options for action steps. So, women could select one of seven of these options that they wanted to implement over the next month, and they are,

to eat more fruits and vegetables, physical activity, go to the dentist, set up an appointment for a physical exam, multi-vitamin, etc, etc.

Let's see... just in general, we surpassed the recruitment goal, there were 293 women that attended at least one workshop. Two hundred nine-three women, 64% completed the healthy life plan, and 187 women completed the healthy life plan, and 55% of those women, 55% of that 187 were between the ages of 18 and 44. We had some women who were older than the 44 age. And then 73% of those 187 attended a follow up session which was held the next month. A month later, we went back in to see if they actually implemented their health life plan and to follow up with them. So, 136 women participated in that.

And some of the findings, some of the action step implemented, 60% reported eating more fruits and vegetables, 55% increased physical activity, 42% seen a dentist or brushing their teeth twice a day, 17% made an appointment for a physical exam, and 42% taking a multi-vitamin. Other changes reported were weight loss, increased walking, using their pedometers, cooking, eating less bread and tortillas, drinking more water, including more water in their diet. One hundred eight women took the pre and post survey, but there were several challenges we encountered throughout the whole project. One of the challenges was women sharing their answers in the pre-survey so the knowledge seemed to be more in the pre-survey; we showed a decrease in knowledge in the last

survey, so there was a little challenge with that. But overall, we had 41% reported an increase in their awareness and 35% had no change.

A significant barrier in terms of the overall project was the low literacy level that even the Worksite One is LA people who work with this particular population at American Apparel, they didn't expect. They really felt like the literacy level was a lot lower were used to, and so our How Healthy Are You? brochure, which I believe was at an eighth grade level was way too high in terms of the literacy level for the women, so they had to spend a lot of time talking though and really just going through each question, question by question verbally in order for the women to be able to understand them.

And then also, another challenge was that a lot of women wanted to participate, and then American Apparel themselves, they combined a couple of lunch periods, so instead of having a 30-person workshop, there would be a 100-person workshop and trying to do a workshop in 30 minutes for 100 people and have them eat their food and listen and do everything else, it was definitely a challenge for our facilitators.

Let's see... just in terms of lessons learned. Oh, I should say, some of the other challenges, one of the other challenges we faced was the whole thing was conducted in Spanish, but we had about five Asian language speaking women who wanted to participate and it was one of the things where we couldn't deny

them from participating, but then again, the facilitators weren't prepared to take them into the workshop, so they had them come in and then had another facilitator try to do an English version because they didn't have anyone for, I think was Korean was the language they spoke. And then also, there was a lot of interest from the men at American Apparel. So, men kept coming by every Monday and trying to see what was going on and wanting to participate, so there was a lot of interest and energy overall.

Some of the lessons learned were, the worksite was a viable venue to reach low income women with preconception health messages. It is critical to have the support of the worksite management. Like I said, this particular work site as it happens to be very progressive in terms of the things that they do, in terms of the health issues. And the curriculum must be culturally and linguistically relevant to the target population.

And I'll be happy to take any questions. Thank you.

FACILITATOR: Well, thanks presenters. I think those were three exciting projects. Vanessa's going to be passing out the evaluations, but while you were all getting those forms, questions that any of you have for each of our presenters? Any of our presenters? Any questions? Yeah.

Q: This is **** from ****, **** was this done on the web and keep –

A: No, that was actually at the bars. We had teams that went out to the bars and did pre-tests, 450 prior to the campaign and then the same amount after. Yeah.

FACILITATOR: Other questions? Yeah.

Q: Can you talk about the political **** ?

A: Okay. No, that was quite a challenge. We actually – and I don't think I'm going to share with you the actual theme line that we originally came up with because I'm hopeful that we can maybe get that through with some other administration in our state. But we had a really awesome, great theme line to start with and got a lot of buy-in. We set it up so that we could make sure that the DHH, Department of Health and Hospitals in the state, had participated in kind of the development of this theme idea and what was challenging though, even at the very end when you had to get final approvals on our print material, we were all the way to the end stage of printing our materials and kind of coming out with this theme, is that it got pulled. It was a little too cutting edge, a little too, I don't know what the right word is, do you have a good word for it? Sexy. It was a little too sexy. And I guarantee you that that message would have, I mean every single resident in Louisiana would have kind of – it was really pretty hot. So, but not in an offensive way. I don't think. But it could be potentially interpreted that way. So, it's

challenging to do your homework, to get it right, and then to get it pulled and have to go with your second best idea.

FACILITATOR: Someone have a question?

Q: First of all, I'd like to thank all of you, you guys did a great job. I'm from Wisconsin, **** actually **** state, we were also **** as well, so it's nice to see different **** we have the street team, we have a little bit of just about everything that was mentioned here, and you make it seem so easy. I don't know, we struggled just to wrap our arms around the whole issue of life force and how to put that into a social marketing initiative. We spent lots of time on that, and so, in our state, we really tried to focus on trying to close the racial disparities and birth outcomes. And so in doing that, we looked at that 12 point plane **** like that, are you familiar with that? Okay. I mean, it just seems when you think about the politics of dealing with this issue one when it has to do with undue racism, how do you come up with messaging that deals with issues of social justice without coming off as a complaining community **** disparities. So I was just wondering if any of you had to address that ****?

A: I mean, we're going there because I think that in order to really make a difference, we're going to have to go there. And so that is some of the conversation that we are now having. We kind of rolled out something to get us started, but we really need to include is disparity issue on a grander, more in-

depth scale. What was important for us to kind of get something like this initiated, and I don't know if this is really your questions, but for the Partners for Healthy Babies project, which is sort of the mother project of this one, we had a MCH Stakeholders strategic planning session for that campaign for the Partners for Healthy Babies. And given the data, given what people were saying, it was very clear that we needed to go this route of preconception, interconception health. And so that really gave us the kind of the fuel to move forward and figure it out, and how do we, again, reach an audience that doesn't believe that they're the audience? We do have the benefit of working with an advertising firm. Again, one of the best in the area that was very helpful in kind of making us think out of the box and that kind of stuff. So, again, I'm not sure I'm answering your question, but yeah, we do need to really – now that we've got going, go even further and work in this disparity issue with things like this too.

A: I don't know if I can answer your question, that's a tough one. But there's barriers when you work in government. There's just barriers every step of the way. And one of my greatest barriers was, even though the research showed that our target audience would not go to a government website, I had to go and present before a technical panel of governor appointees and get exempted so we could just keep the .org website. But on that disparities issue in particular, it has to do with TUNE, but not just with TUNE. I think you need to start with your own culture and your own agency to address some of those barriers and injustices there. And that's really tough getting people to change their culture.

FACILITATOR: Tonya did you have an answer?

Q: I think my question was actually answered, I was wondering about the funding, but for your program.

A: Again, it comes from – The Partners for Healthy Babies Project is funded through the Maternal Child Health Block Grant and WIC actually puts in some dollars for that as well. And we've been around since 1993 doing this, so that's I think consistency and longevity campaign is really, really critical. It's not just a one year, maybe two years, it's over time. Nike took 10 years to get recognized.

Q: Actually, I have a question for you. It's relative to WIC dollars, because certainly in our state, we have great difficulty partnering with WIC in these sort of efforts like this because what we hear is that their funding stream is very restrictive and categorical and they don't really have a lot of funding room to do those sorts of activities that don't necessarily kind of meet the regulations as outlined. How did this work for WIC to partner with you funding-wise?

A: Well, they have a smaller portion for the funding of the project. But I think again, back in 1993, I think it has a lot to do with some of the relationships in our agency and that those were in place and then we had to justify that we were really doing something that was connected and related to WIC and our Helpline,

for example, most of the calls to our partners for Healthy Babies Health line are WIC-related. So, there is a way to justify that. Again, as we have staff changes, we have to come to the table and develop those relationships to make sure they get it that this is good. So, it's – and we have a great administrator in Louisiana for the Maternal Child Health Program. So, that helps a lot.

FACILITATOR: Any other questions, thoughts, comments?

Q: Do you think it – did you notice any difference in **** in time to promote preconception message versus interconception?

A: Well, like I said, in this particular work place project, we didn't use the word, and I think for the most part, the women that we worked with in this project, it was an interconception health message really because most of the women had children, and so it was the same message that we do with our Best Baby Collaborative kind of that care in between pregnancies and part of our project that we do with our Best Baby Collaborative is they have to work with women who have had some type of adverse birth outcome in that first pregnancy in order to qualify for that program, and so they're messages are very targeted and their services are very targeted in terms of whether it's dealing with diabetes or dealing with whatever the health issue is, but it did end up being for us and interconception health messages versus preconception.

FACILITATOR: Other questions? No. All right. Well thanks for your attention, and please remember your evaluation. Thanks to our panel.