

Appendix D

Involving Others

Sample Cover Letters

We have provided a variety of cover letters for your use. They all have different tones and are addressed to different types of professionals or organizations. If you find you like the style of one, but the purpose of another, you can combine elements of different letters to suit your needs.

Nurse Manager

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Dear Nurse Manager (Use Name):

I want to share with you a project of great importance, and one that is close to my heart as a (e.g., parent of a child with spina bifida or a health care provider who treats children with spina bifida). As you may know, 400 micrograms (0.4 milligram) of folic acid per day taken preconceptionally and through the first three months of pregnancy can prevent 50-75% of new cases of neural tube defects (NTDs). Timing is the critical factor in prevention; folic acid must be in a woman's body **before** she conceives to prevent NTDs. Because over 50% of all pregnancies are not planned, **all** women of childbearing age should consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.

We have sent your office an information kit, poster and brochures about folic acid. **We would appreciate your giving out these brochures to your clients who are women of childbearing age.** We would appreciate your help in getting the word out and hope that you are able to place these materials in a prominent location in your waiting room, and talk to your patients about how important folic acid is for their health and for the health of their future children.

If you find you need more materials please call _____ at _____. Please know that you play a vital role in preventing neural tube defects. We are grateful for the opportunity to support you in that role.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your title

Health Care Provider

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Dear Health Care Professional (Use Name):

You have a vital role in preventing some serious birth defects : spina bifida, anencephaly, and encephalocele. It is time to spread the word about folic acid's role in preventing these serious and common birth defects. We would like to send you some free educational materials for you to give your female patients of childbearing age. Enclosed you will find a sample pamphlet.

In 1992, the US Public Health Service (PHS) recommended that all women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (0.4 milligram) of folic acid each day. If taken preconceptionally and through the first three months of pregnancy, 400 micrograms (0.4 milligram) of synthetic folic acid in addition to a women's regular diet can prevent 50-75% of neural tube defects (NTDs). This timing is important because the neural tube forms 2-4 weeks into development, often before a woman realizes she is pregnant.

Women can attain the PHS recommendation of 400 micrograms of folic acid per day by taking a multivitamin containing folic acid daily, eating a breakfast cereal fortified with 100 percent of the daily value of folic acid (e.g., Total, Product 19), or eating plenty of foods fortified with folic acid and rich in folate. PHS recommends that women with a previous NTD-affected pregnancy, who are at increased risk, take 4 mg of folic acid per day. These women should consult their health care professional about taking this amount of folic acid daily.

I/We encourage you to evaluate **all** women's diets for adequate folic acid consumption, beginning with early adolescence in order to establish good nutritional habits. It is critical to counsel women who are planning to become pregnant to ensure that they have adjusted their diets and are consuming daily the recommended 400 micrograms of folic acid.

Should you wish to obtain additional information, please contact _____, title, address, phone number.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your title

Pharmacist

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Dear Pharmacist (Use name):

YOUR GROUP is very excited to collaborate with THE PHARMACISTS ORGANIZATION/STORE to prevent neural tube defects (NTDs). Your support in promoting folic acid to women of childbearing age shows your concern for the health of your customers. We thank you very much and hope that the message will have a particular impact for women around the celebration of MOTHER'S DAY [or other appropriate date] in a few weeks.

Enclosed are the following items: one poster to display at your pharmacy, Mother's Day cards for distribution to your customers, and a master copy of the educational information contained inside this card. Please feel free to make additional copies of the educational information to use for flyers to educate your customers. Because Mother's Day is in a few weeks, you can display the poster and begin distributing the educational material immediately and through the week of Mother's Day.

I/We appreciate your willingness to disseminate this important public health message to your childbearing-age customers. It is collaborative efforts such as this that will help ensure the health of future generations of your city/county/state. Should you have any questions concerning the activity, please contact _____, title, address, phone number.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your title

Newsletter or Newspaper Publisher

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Dear Use Contact Name:

YOUR GROUP would like to introduce "The Title of Your Program," with the support of LIST OF YOUR PARTNERS. This campaign is designed to YOUR GOAL.

YOUR GROUP would like to request that NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER join in spreading this important information by including some or all of the following information in your newsletter.

YOUR GROUP is proud to introduce "The Title of your Program." This project is a city/county/state wide health program to encourage childbearing age women to consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to reduce their risk of having a pregnancy affected by severe birth defects called neural tube defects (NTDs) or anencephaly and spina bifida. Women who take 400 micrograms of folic acid on a daily basis before they become pregnant can reduce their chances of having a child with an NTD by up to 75%. Women can get enough folic acid daily by taking a multivitamin containing folic acid, eating a breakfast cereal fortified with 100 percent of the daily value of folic acid (e.g., Total, Product 19), or eating plenty of foods fortified with folic acid and rich in folate (e.g., dark, green leafy vegetables). In YOUR CITY/COUNTY/STATE the rate of NTD-affected pregnancies is ___ the national rate. If you have any questions, please call YOUR GROUP at YOUR PHONE NUMBER."

Enclosed is more information regarding NTDs (spina bifida and anencephaly), and any printing of this material would be greatly appreciated. I will check back with you in a few months to see if you were able to use the information provided and if I can be of further assistance.

Thank you in advance for helping us spread the folic acid message.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your title

Radio or Television Station Public Service Announcement Director

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Dear Public Service Announcement Director (Use name):

You can play a vital role in preventing birth defects in your community. “Not since the rubella vaccine became available 30 years ago have we had a comparable opportunity to effectively, safely and inexpensively prevent such common and serious birth defects (Oakley, Godfrey, MD, JAMA, March 10, 1993).” Each year about _____ of babies in your CITY/COUNTY/STATE and approximately 2500 babies nationwide are born with serious birth defects of the spine and brain, called neural tube defects (NTDs). A woman can reduce her risk of having a child born with an NTD by 50-75% by just consuming daily 400 micrograms of a B-vitamin called folic acid before becoming pregnant.

Women can get enough folic acid daily by taking a multivitamin containing folic acid, eating a breakfast cereal fortified with 100 percent of the daily value of folic acid (e.g., Total, Product 19), or eating plenty of foods fortified with folic acid and rich in folate (e.g, dark, green leafy vegetables). Even though folic acid is easy to obtain, it is estimated that two-thirds of women in the U.S. do not get enough. We are writing to ask that you help inform women in CITY/COUNTY/STATE about the benefits of folic acid by airing the enclosed ??-second public service announcement. Also enclosed is an “announcer copy” spot for use by your DJs and other on-air personalities. *(If you are familiar with the radio station-- add text which indicates that you are a listener and that you would be thrilled if “DJ’s name” would make the announcement and talk about the importance of preparing to have a healthy baby.*

Please use both spots as often as possible, especially during Folic Acid Awareness Week/Month in your CITY/COUNTY/STATE, DATES.

And be sure to let us know of your support by returning the enclosed “bounce-back” card.

Thank you for your assistance in spreading the word to women in CITY/COUNTY/STATE with this important health message.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your title

Advertising Agency

YOUR AGENCY
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Date

Contact Name, Agency Name & Address

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Contact Name:

You can play a vital role in helping to prevent serious birth defects by promoting folic acid in your community. “Not since the rubella vaccine became available 30 years ago have we had a comparable opportunity to effectively, safely and inexpensively prevent such common and serious birth defects (Oakley, Godfrey, MD, JAMA, March 10, 1993).”

YOUR AGENCY along with YOUR PARTNERS would like to introduce to you TITLE OF YOUR PROGRAM. We are a nonprofit group dedicated to get the word out about the benefits of folic acid. However, none of our partners can provide the unique skills of AD AGENCY NAME. We hope you will seriously consider joining us and improve the health of our community’s mothers and babies. Following is some background information to further acquaint you with our hopes for a folic acid promotional program.

The program’s goal is to increase the number of women who know that folic acid can prevent some birth defects and consumes enough folic acid daily to reduce the risk for these serious birth defects. Nationally, approximately 4,000 pregnancies are affected by spina bifida every year. Annually, in YOUR COMMUNITY, XX babies are born with spina bifida. Women who take enough folic acid on a daily basis, before and after they become pregnant, can reduce their chances for having a baby with spina bifida by up to 75 percent. Even though there are several easy and inexpensive ways to get enough folic acid daily, two-thirds of women in the United States still do not consume enough to prevent these serious birth defects. We would greatly appreciate any help you may be able to provide with any aspects of our campaign including: logo, billboards, television/radio PSAs, transit advertising, magazine/newspaper ad slicks, and mall advertising. More information about the important discovery of folic acid reducing the risk for spina bifida and our association is attached.

I understand that you have a large number of non-profits requesting your assistance on other valuable efforts. “YOUR PROGRAM’S NAME” is one of the most important health issues for women of childbearing age today and needs the creative expertise of ADVERTISING AGENCY to get the message out effectively. I will be grateful for any services you may be able to provide.

Very Truly Yours, Your Name, Your Title

Community Partnership Activity Lists

Grocery Stores

Store name:

Contact name:

Address:

Phone:

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

- Develop and post labels to signify foods that naturally contain, or are fortified with, folic acid.
- Design a seasonal produce section display to highlight fresh fruits and vegetables that are good sources of folate.
- Include "folic acid facts" in your store's printed, radio, or television advertisements.
- Include folic acid brochures and posters in the literature display of the customer service area and on store bulletin boards.
- Organize shopper's clubs discounts for the purchase of store brand food items and locally grown produce that contain folate, for example, green leafy vegetables, orange juice, cereals, and breads. Track the number of folic acid-rich foods sold during the discount period.
- Conduct food preparation or cooking demonstrations using folic acid-rich foods.
- Include folic acid messages on recipes given out to customers at in-store demonstrations.
- Print folic acid messages on flyers, grocery bags, banners, and so forth.
- Include a folic acid brochure with each grocery order or prescription dispensed at your store pharmacy. Track the number of brochures distributed with medication and/or groceries purchased.
- Print a folic acid message on store-brand orange juice cartons.
- Donate or underwrite the cost of discount coupons for purchase of store-brand multivitamins.
- Wear folic acid buttons while at work.

Fill in the blank with your own suggestions.

Medical/Health Care Providers

Name:

Contact name:

Address:

Phone:

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

- Send letters to other MDs, family practices, OB/GYNs.
- Discuss and distribute folic acid on grand rounds.
- Write an article highlighting the benefits of folic acid for childbearing age women in a professional organization newsletter. (e.g., medical or pharmaceutical society)
- Distribute informational packets to MDs, RNs, and staff.
- Participate in a folic acid advisory board.
- Handout folic acid Rx pads to my female patients of childbearing age and encourage my peers to do the same.
- Display flyers, posters and fact sheets in waiting or exam rooms.
- Place folic acid materials in various waiting rooms.
- Provide sample vitamins to female patients.
- Provide "Lunch and Learn" in-services on folic acid to MDs and staff.
- Run a video on folic acid on the television in the waiting room.

Please tell us your own suggestions below.

Pharmacies*Store Name:**Contact name:**Address:**Phone:*

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

- Include a folic acid brochure with each prescription dispensed.
- Donate or underwrite the cost of discount coupons for purchase of store brand multi-vitamins.
- Incorporate a folic acid message in print, television, and/or radio advertisements.
- Include folic acid brochures in the literature display at your customer service area.
- Print a folic acid message on prescription bags for one month.
- Donate or underwrite the cost of printing promotional materials (e.g., banners, flyers and so forth).
- Distribute promotional and educational materials, such as magnets, brochures, flyers, and stickers.
- Print an article on folic acid in professional and customer newsletters.
- Provide a folic acid message on pharmacy display boards.
- Incorporate folic acid information and education during Pharmacy Week.
- Distribute folic acid information at health fairs.

Please tell us your own suggestions below.

Schools

Name:

Contact name:

Address:

Phone:

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

- Plan a strategy for spreading the word about the benefits of folic acid with administrators, nurses, and health, family and consumer science teachers.
- Conduct a "Train the Trainer" activity in-service for health, family, consumer science teachers and school nurses.
- Incorporate a folic acid video tape or other activities into the lesson plans of health classes for middle and high school students.
- Provide information at non-traditional educational programs (e.g., adult Graduation Equivalent Degree (GED) programs or refugee programs).
- Incorporate a folic acid lesson plan into Teen Mother and other after-school programs.
- Have orange juice served in classes receiving the folic acid lesson.
- Display posters and provide information for school health bulletin boards and centers.
- Broadcast messages on college campus radio and TV stations.
- Hold poster contests.
- Work with the school lunch staff to highlight foods high in folic acid.
- Use folic acid tray liners in the cafeteria.
- Publish articles about folic acid in newsletters for both staff and parents.

Managed Care Providers

Name:

Contact name:

Address:

Phone:

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

_____ Write informational articles to medical directors, providers, staff, and members in newsletters.

_____ Medical director

- a. provide information packet to medical staff.
- b. provide packet to network provider.
- c. provide information to clients/members.

_____ Distribute educational Rx pads to practitioners.

_____ Provide information on folic acid for managed care providers and staff.

Please tell us your own suggestions below.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Clinics

Name:

Contact name:

Address:

Phone:

Please check all activities that you are able to participate in during _____.

- Write an article about "Folic Acid and It's Role in Prevention of Neural Tube Defects" and an explanation of "the community effort" for your newsletter or local newspaper.
- Recruit/solicit support from Rds in the community. Encourage RDs (registered dietitians) to become actively involved in promoting the community folic acid promotion effort in their work environments.
- Include a series on folic acid in WIC Newsletter. Encouraging consumption of food sources of folic acid and giving recipes using seasonal foods high in folic acid.
- Adapt WIC Dietary Screening Form to highlight foods high in folic acid (may be some overlap to foods already included on screening form.)
- Wear folic acid promotion buttons. Message ideas include: *Ask a Nutritionist About Folic Acid, Did You Know About Folic Acid, or Cereal, Broccoli, and Orange Juice Help Your Baby to a Healthy Start-Ask Me Why.*
- Wear T-shirts that say *Ask Me About Preventing Birth Defects* and give a folic acid message.
- Place table tents on table with folic acid information in WIC clinic.
- Give out materials to clients on folic acid and/or list of foods that are good sources of folic acid.
- Display posters or play videotapes for clients in WIC Clinic waiting rooms on the benefits of folic acid.
- Conduct classes on folic acid for prenatal orientation groups.
- Display posters in restrooms and over changing table about folic acid.
- Hand out "Buy One Get One Free" farmers market coupon for foods high in folate (provided a WIC clinic wants to collaborate with the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program.)
- Design and print WIC envelopes with a message about food high in folic acid.
- Give away water bottles, magnets, pens, and so forth with folic acid slogan on them.

Please tell us your own suggestions below.

