

Ten Great Public Health Achievements – United States, 2001-2010

Maternal and Infant Health

The past decade has seen significant reductions in the number of infants born with neural tube defects (NTDs) and expansion of screening of newborns for metabolic and other heritable disorders. Mandatory folic acid fortification of cereal grain products labeled as enriched in the United States beginning in 1998 contributed to a 36% reduction in NTDs from 1996 to 2006 and prevented an estimated 10,000 NTD-affected pregnancies in the past decade, resulting in a savings of \$4.7 billion in direct costs (25–27).

Improvements in technology and endorsement of a uniform newborn-screening panel of diseases have led to earlier life-saving treatment and intervention for at least 3,400 additional newborns each year with selected genetic and endocrine disorders (28,29). In 2003, all but four states were screening for only six of these disorders. By April 2011, all states reported screening for at least 26 disorders on an expanded and standardized uniform panel (29). Newborn screening for hearing loss increased from 46.5% in 1999 to 96.9% in 2008 (30). The percentage of infants not passing their hearing screening who were then diagnosed by an audiologist before age 3 months as either normal or having permanent hearing loss increased from 51.8% in 1999 to 68.1 in 2008 (30).

ACHDNC:

- Uniform set of conditions across states/territories (April 2011—26 disorders)
- 3,400 children identified each year with select endocrine and genetic disorders
- Hearing loss – 47% -- 96% 1999-2008