



The National Conference of State Legislatures

Presentation for the Act
Early Regional Summit

February 28, 2008

NCSL Helps States With Their Ideas



NCSL provides many services to all 50
state legislatures



Denver Office



D.C. Office

NCSL is the Forum for America's Ideas



NCSL believes strong states make a strong nation.

- NCSL helps states share their ideas.
- NCSL helps states learn about new ideas.
- NCSL lobbies Congress about state issues and concerns.

NCSL is the Forum for America's Ideas



NCSL conducts many activities

- Provides research—25,000 requests per year.
- Sponsors many meetings.
- Produces many publications.
- Provides many Web-based resources.

NCSL has many resources



- Publications

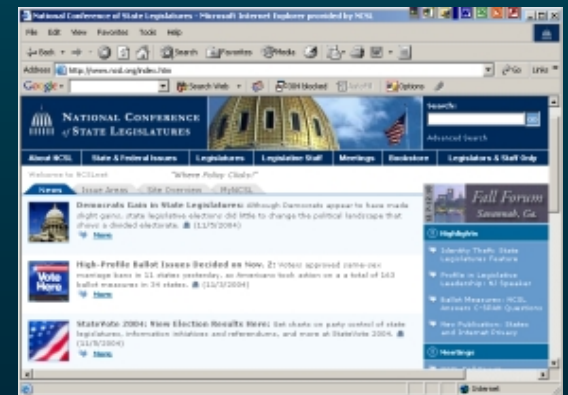
- *State Legislatures* magazine, newsletters, books

- Web Site: www.ncsl.org

- Access to all NCSL services

- Speeches in states

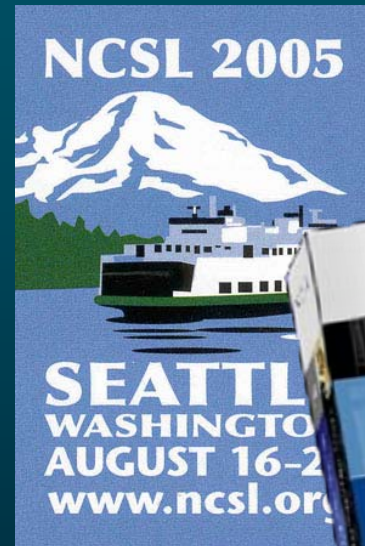
- Individual state solutions



NCSL holds many meetings for legislators



- NCSL Legislative Summit
- Fall Forum, Spring Forum
- Issue-Based Seminars
- Staff Section Meeting
- Leaders Training and Conferences
- Web-assisted Teleconferences
- NCSL's Toolkit
- Media Training
- America's Legislators Back to School Week



NCSL Works in Washington, D.C.

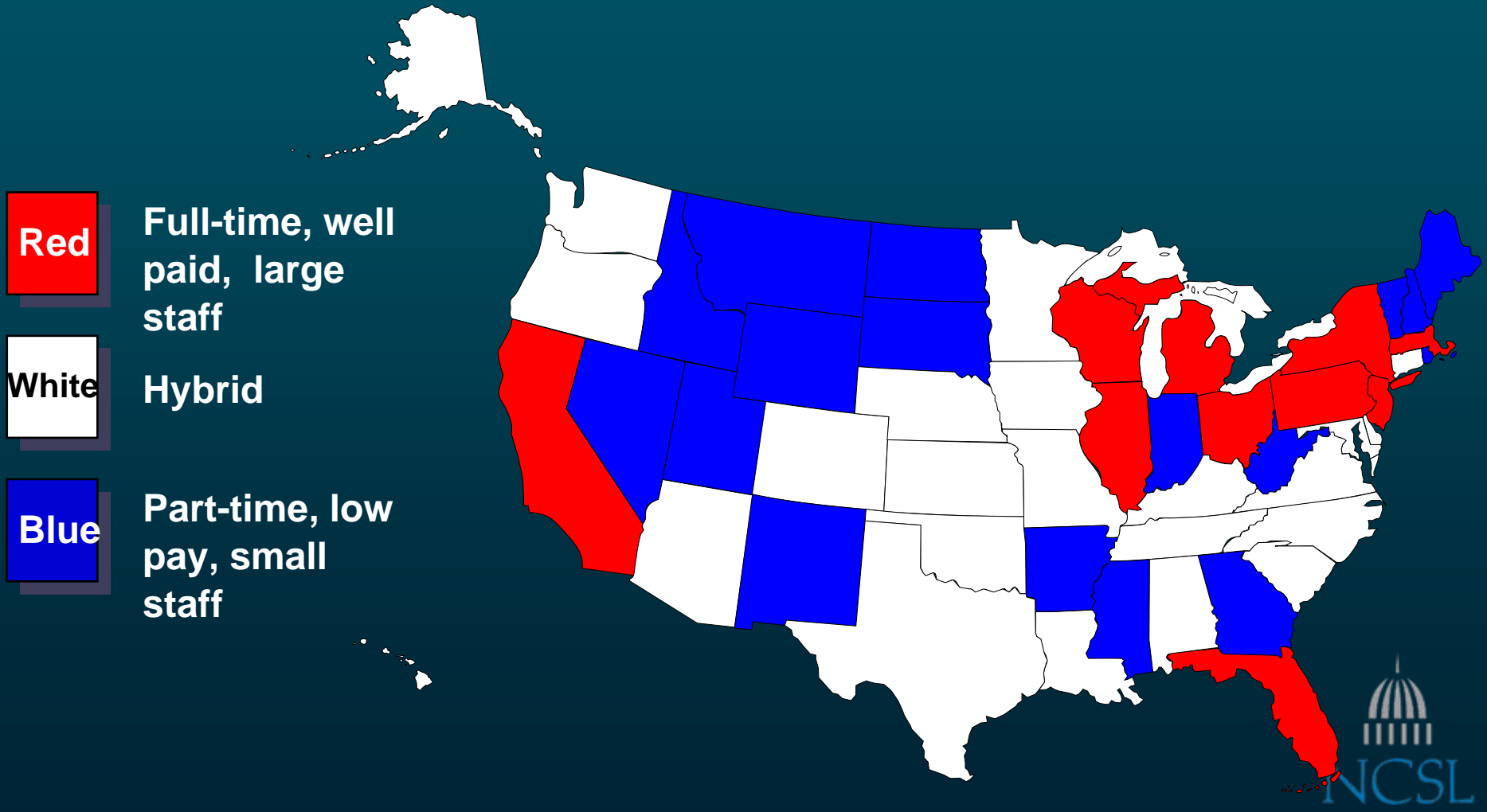


- Meet with the Administration and Congress
- Lobby Congress
 - To maintain strong state government
 - To fund anything that Congress requires states to do
 - To prevent federal law from replacing state law

Variety in State Legislatures

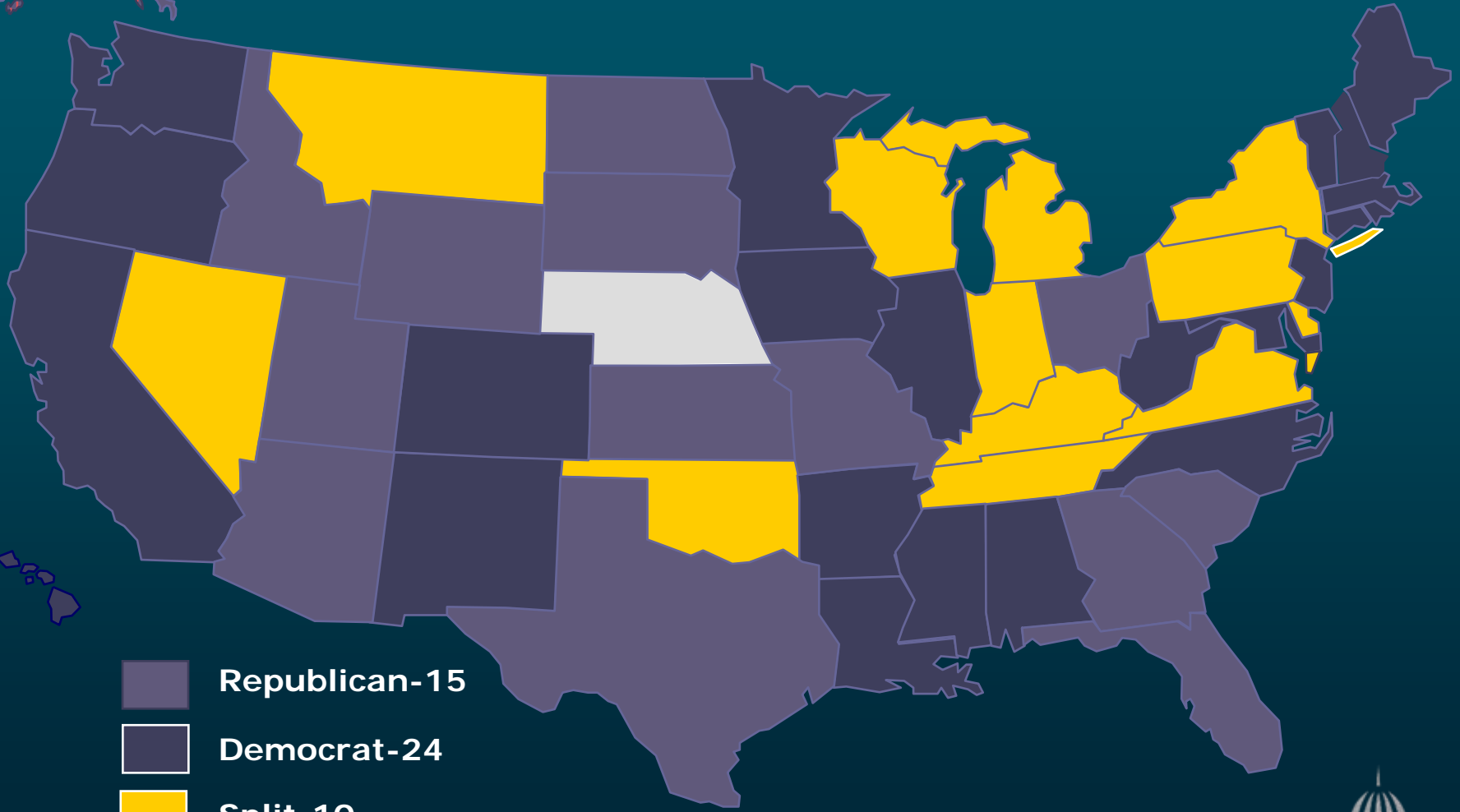
- If you've seen one legislature- you've seen just one!
- Different cultures, powers, rules, procedures, etc.
 - California
 - Full time job
 - Members earn \$113,098 year
 - Large staff (non-partisan, partisan, personal)
 - Wyoming
 - 40 day general session, 20 day budget session
 - Members earn \$150 day
 - Approx. 20-25 full-time professional staff

Red, White & Blue Legislatures



- Red** Full-time, well paid, large staff
- White** Hybrid
- Blue** Part-time, low pay, small staff

State Legislative Party Control Post Election--2008



-  Republican-15
-  Democrat-24
-  Split-10
-  Nonpartisan-1

Note: Based on Unofficial Results Pending Recounts 11-30-06

Party Control Among States

- Nationwide there are 62 more Republican legislators than Democrats-less than a one percent margin of the 7,382 legislative seats.
- From 1952 to 2002, Democrats held the overall edge. The 2002 election culminated the gradual shift to a Republican majority of all legislative seats-the first time that had happened in 50 years.

Term Limits: Extra Challenges

- ❑ 15 states currently have term limits;
 - AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, LA, ME, MI, MO, MT, NE, NV, OH, OK, SD
- ❑ Opposition and supporters leave
- ❑ Continuing education process
- ❑ Severe transitions in some states
 - Missouri House 2002: 73 of 163 new (45%)
 - Michigan Senate 2002: 27 of 38 new (71%)

Legislators: Why Should You Care?

- Control the purse strings
- Establish Programs
- Enact Requirements
- Provide Oversight

Legislators Are Generalists

← Dozens of topics:
A to Z

← Hundreds of bills

← Can't be experts in all

← Agriculture

← Corrections

← Education

← Health

← Housing

← Human Services

← Labor

← Transportation

← Zoning . . .

Health Issues by the Dozens

- ⊠ Medicaid
- ⊠ Insurance/mg'd care
- ⊠ Pharmaceuticals
- ⊠ Long-term Care
- ⊠ Uninsured
- ⊠ Health professions
- ⊠ Health Facilities
- ⊠ Environmental
- ⊠ Public health

- ⊠ SCHIP
- ⊠ Prenatal Care
- ⊠ EMS
- ⊠ Nutrition
- ⊠ Oral health
- ⊠ Injury prevention
- ⊠ Mental Health
- ⊠ Disabilities
- ⊠ Substance Abuse
- ⊠ etc.

Competing For Legislators' Attention

AUTISM

A BLIP ON THE
POLITICAL RADAR
SCREEN



Your Role as an Expert

- The “blip enlarger”!
 - Information resource
 - Advocate
 - Networker
 - Service Provider

NCSL Health Project Activities

← Information clearinghouse

← Publications

← Web pages

← www.ncsl.org/programs/health/mchmain.htm

← Meeting sessions

← Web-assisted audioconferences

← Track state activities

Autism: Enacted Legislation 2006-2007

- Nearly 50 bills passed in 2006-2007 related to autism
- Created statewide registries (IL, NH, NJ)
- Education about importance of early screening and detection
- Raising awareness (license plates)

Autism: Enacted Legislation 2006-2007 (cont'd)

- Training first responders & teachers about developmental disabilities
- Established group homes for teens (IL)
- Research, available funding and financing
- Created task forces and commissions

2008 Autism Legislation (Over 500 Bills as of 2/25/08)

- Appropriations (84)
- Awareness (81)
- Criminal Justice (16)
- Education (67)
- Employment (1)
- Financing (138)
- Infrastructure (72)
- Pilot Programs (22)
- Professional Training (23)
- Screening (16)
- Task Force (71)

Dos and Don'ts of Working with Legislators

- Do

- Get involved (year 'round)
- Be accurate, reliable, honest, concise, vigilant
- Build relationships early
- Reach out to new members
- Offer to be a resource
- Be inclusive of others
- Provide written materials
- Personalize the issue/take a field trip
- Thank your audience

- Don't

- Assume you don't count
- Mislead or give false information
- Make enemies
- Wait until session
- Be too narrowly focused
- Refuse to compromise
- Go on and on.....
- Give up

Opportunities and Challenges

- Help the state define its goals related to health, and specifically, autism
 - Maintaining records/registries of children with autism
 - Funding education programs for parents and health professionals
- What is the appropriate role of government?
 - Private sector?
 - Individuals?

How Do You Get Started?

← What are your goals?

- ↳ Be a key stakeholder and resource?
- ↳ Become involved in the planning process?
- ↳ Publicize your activities?
- ↳ Develop the community infrastructure?
- ↳ Empower families?

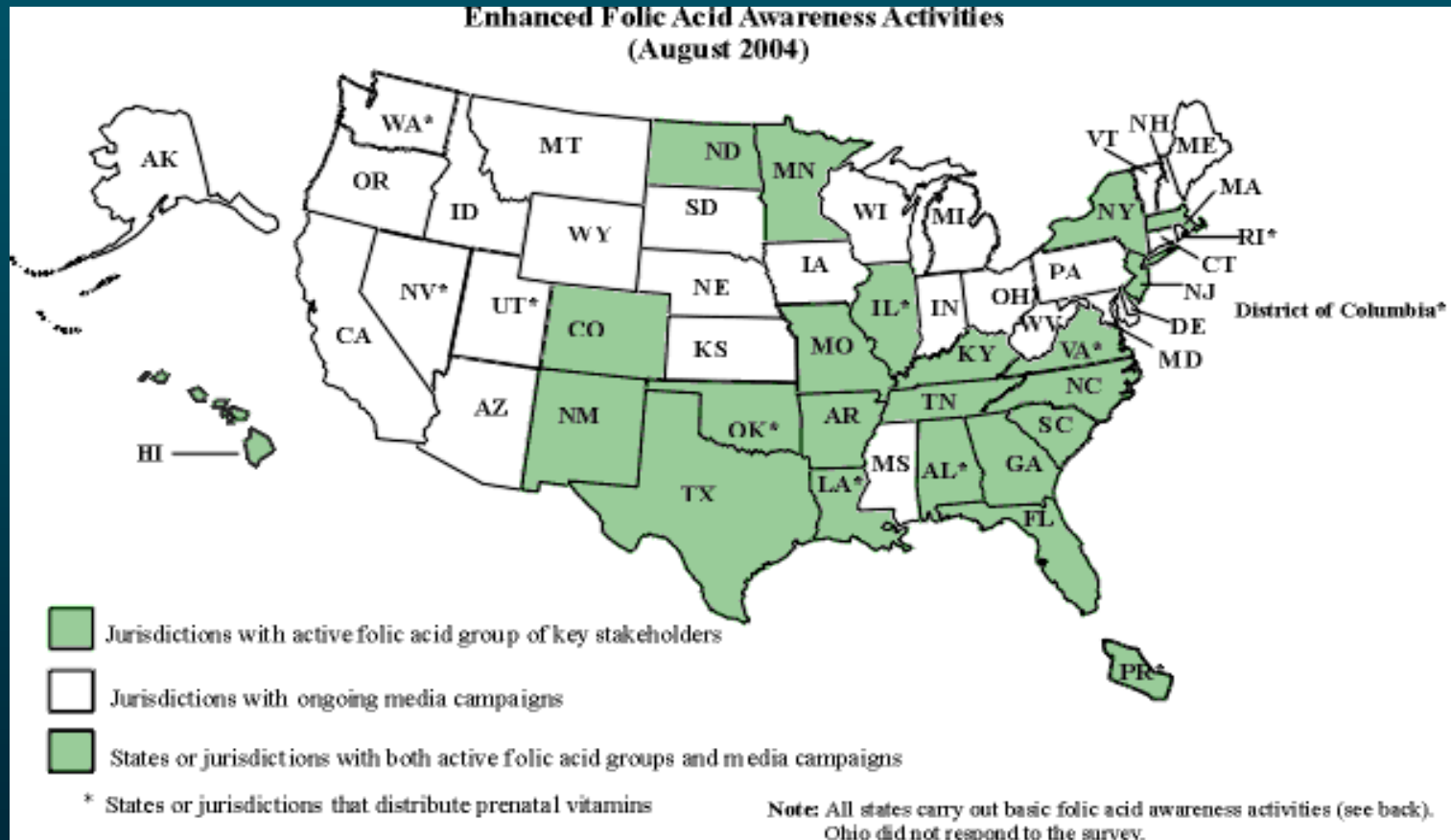
← What are the best methods to achieve them?

← What is your action plan?

Other Things to Think About...

- ← What type of information do policymakers need?
- ← What's the best way to deliver the information?
- ← For legislators:
 - ↳ Be brief, concise, thorough
 - ↳ Be vigilant
 - ↳ Follow-up if they need more

Sample Postcard- Front



Sample Postcard - Back

NCSL



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Last year in the United States, 1,000 fewer babies were born with a serious birth defect of the brain and spine because of the B-vitamin folic acid.

Folic acid is found in most enriched foods and multivitamins. Taking folic acid decreases the risk for neural tube defects or severe birth defects of a baby's brain (anencephaly) or spine (spina bifida). In fact, up to 70 percent of these serious birth defects could be prevented if all women took folic acid daily before and during pregnancy.

Neural tube defects are costly and can result in lifelong disabilities and death. The cost of caring for a single child with spina bifida can exceed \$1 million. Since about 50 percent of pregnancies are unplanned, folic acid education can help women of child-bearing age understand the benefits of taking a daily multivitamin to avoid these birth defects.

All states integrate folic acid information into programs such as WIC or family planning programs that provide services to pregnant women, and most conduct various forms of educational outreach. The map on this postcard highlights some other activities reported by states. Other national organizations and federal agencies also contribute to education efforts.

- The more than 80 members of the National Council on Folic Acid work to promote the benefits and consumption of folic acid (www.folicacidinfo.org)
- The Food and Drug Administration required fortification of grain products with folic acid, resulting in an estimated savings of \$145 million and a 26 percent decline in preventable birth defects.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides free folic acid education materials for states and others.

For more information about folic acid and preventing birth defects, please visit: www.ncsl.org/programs/health/birthdefects.htm or www.cdc.gov/folicacid.



For More Information

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Visit the NCSL website...

– Maternal and Child Health Project

www.ncsl.org/programs/health/mchmain.htm

– Health Program

www.ncsl.org/programs/health/h-healthcare.htm

