

March of Dimes Foundation

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March of Dimes Statement in Opposition to a Tax on Prenatal/Multi Vitamins

The March of Dimes opposes a provision in the Miscellaneous Tax Bill that applies a 6% tax to prenatal vitamins or multivitamins which include a folic acid supplement. While we acknowledge the need and difficult task of raising new revenue in the current economic climate; taxing such vitamins could have a deleterious impact on healthy behaviors, and in particular, that of pregnant women and infants.

Vitamins and minerals play an important role in women of childbearing age. These nutrients are needed for a healthy pregnancy. Some women cannot get enough vitamins and minerals in their diet, and may need to take a supplement such as prenatal vitamins or multivitamins containing 400 micrograms of folic acid. Consumption of folic acid prior to conception and during the early months of pregnancy can reduce the number of neural tube defects (NTDs) by 50% - 70% according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NTDs include spina bifida, a leading cause of childhood paralysis, and anencephaly, which usually leads to death shortly after birth. In 1998, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) further recommended that all women of childbearing age consume 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid daily from fortified foods and/or a supplement in addition to food foliates from a varied diet.

In accordance with recommendations of the U. S. Public Health Service and the Institute of Medicine, the March of Dimes strongly advocates that all women who can become pregnant consume a multivitamin containing 400 micrograms of folic acid daily as a part of a healthy diet. We believe a tax on these vitamins and folic acid supplements will serve to deter women from taking these preventative measures.