Supporting Statement B

for

Communication Research on Folic Acid to Support the Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

New

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B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

Qualitative research methods will be used to help us gain an in-depth understanding about women's use of corn masa and their perceptions and acceptability of educational materials about folic acid fortification. Qualitative research software (QRS), such as NVivo8, serve as useful data analysis tools for classifying, sorting, and arranging textual data to develop meaningful conclusions. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not rely on statistics or numbers. Rather than presenting the results in the form of numerical values, qualitative research produces words in the form of comments and statements. Its aim is to discover people's attitudes, feelings, and experiences from their own point of view.

Below we describe our recruitment and data collection procedures.

B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in qualitative research. This type of sampling permits the selection of interviewees whose qualities or experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question, and are therefore valuable. We will use a purposive sampling technique to select participants for both Projects 1 and 2. Inclusion criteria for Project 1 are: being female, English or Spanish-speaker, 18 to 44 years of age, living in the U.S., identifying as Mexican, Mexican American, or Central American, and not pregnant at the time of the focus group. For Project 2 inclusion criteria are: being female, age 18 to 44 of age, English-speaker, not pregnant at the time of the focus groups, and have not had children with the birth defects spina bifida or anencephaly.

Recruitment for Project 1 will be conducted in Miami and Dallas. These cities were selected based on census data indicating high numbers of women of Central American descent living in Miami and women of Mexican descent living in Dallas. For Project 2, recruitment will be conducted in Atlanta and St. Louis. These two cities were selected primarily for convenience and to reduce travel costs for project staff -- Battelle has offices in both cities and CDC has offices in Atlanta, and because the target audience for Project 2 is broader and can be found in these cities.

Because we are using a non-probability sample, the study findings from Project 1 are not generalizable to all of Central American and Mexican descent. Similarly, the findings from Project 2 are not generalizable to all women of childbearing age in the United States.

B.2 Procedures for the Collection of Information

Information for this study will be collected using focus groups with non-pregnant women 18-44 years of age who meet the eligibility criteria for the study (Attachments C1 and D1).

All 32 focus groups will be conducted by a 2-person team consisting of two experienced qualitative researchers. One person will serve as the moderator and will be responsible for reviewing the consent form (Attachments C3-C4 and D2) and asking questions using the moderator's guide (Attachments C5-C6 and D3). The second person, the co-moderator, will

serve as the assistant and will take detailed notes. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist at a later date. Each focus group will last approximately 1.5 hours and light refreshments will be provided.

The focus group moderator's guide will be followed to ensure that all of the important topics are addressed in each group. Focus group topic development was based on the study aims and on our review of recent literature concerning food fortification and other complex health conditions. Discussion topics for Project 1 will include general awareness and knowledge about folic acid and its role in neural tube defect prevention, perception of their risk for having an affected pregnancy, awareness and knowledge about fortification of cereal grain products, whether fortification of corn masa flour products would change their current reported use of these products, and overall reaction to potential folic acid fortification of these products.

Discussion topics for Project 2 will also include topics on awareness, knowledge of healthy diets, vitamin intake, and folic acid. Additionally, participants will be shown a few educational brochures about folic acid and birth defects. They will be asked about their opinions on the message, layout, design, color, and length of each brochure.

B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Battelle will subcontract with experienced, reputable focus group facilities and recruiting services providers in the four study sites to conduct screening and recruiting of participants. These subcontractors have up-to-date databases with demographic information including gender, country of origin, race/ethnicity to help them identify potential focus group participants. Contact information of potentially eligible participants will be drawn from these databases based on age (18-44 years old) and gender (female). Whenever potential participants refuse to participate, the subcontractor will draw more names from the database of other potential participants. The day prior to the focus groups, the subcontractors will call each women who have agreed to participate to remind her about the attending the focus group. Because we are conducting 'mini-groups', we expect to have 3-4 participants per group.

B.4 Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

The Focus Group Moderator's Guides and screening instruments were adapted from previous focus group research conducted by CDC. Questions were modified or added to address the specific research questions for Project 1 and 2. In addition, the Guides were reviewed in detail by 2 CDC staff who work in the field of birth defects research and 3 Battelle project staff who have experience in instrument design and focus group research. Suggestions from CDC and Battelle staff were incorporated in subsequent versions of the Guides. The screening tools and moderator guides were also shared with CDC partners who work on the topic of folic acid and conduct educational campaigns aimed at women of childbearing age to ask them for feedback on the instruments.

B.5 Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The data collection and data analysis plans for this study were developed jointly by the experienced public health researchers listed below from NCBDDD/CDC and the Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation. The Battelle team has been authorized and funded by contract 200-2007-20032, Task Order 1 to collect, analyze, and report all study data for this project.

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