

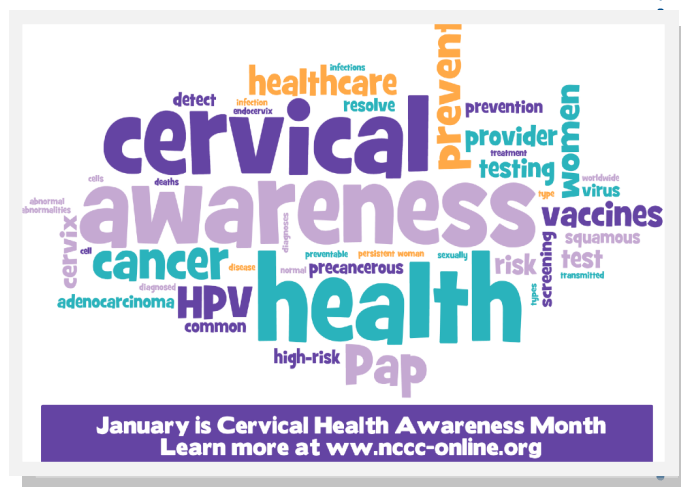
Reproductive Health Education (RH Ed) is an educational newsletter from the Health Advocates at Finger Lakes Community Health. This newsletter covers all reproductive health topics, in addition to related services offered at our health centers.

## January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

The cervix is a part of a woman's reproductive health system, located at the base of the uterus. For that reason, some call it, "the mouth of the uterus." During cervical health awareness month, we'd like to highlight the importance of HPV awareness, cervical cancer prevention, and overall cervical health.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the most commonly transmitted STI. It can cause genital warts, cancer, and can change cells in the cervix. HPV is preventable with a series of three shots, known as Gardasil. Studies show that the best time frame for getting these vaccines is around age 11 or 12, because your body can build up the most immunity to the virus. HPV can cause cancer of the mouth, throat, anus, penis, vagina, and cervix, and can also cause genital warts. The CDC states that nearly all sexually active women and men will be exposed to HPV in their lifetime, so it's important to get vaccinated!

According to the American Cancer Society, cervical cancer is one of the leading causes of death in women, but it can be prevented. PAP smears, which are recommended for women at least every three years, can help detect changes in cell structure. Some women may need a PAP smear more often if they have a history of cervical cancer or abnormal results. Getting regular PAP smears can help detect the changes in cervical cells before they turn into cancer, as well as the early stages of cancer. The earlier a provider can detect these changes, the higher the likelihood of survival. If you haven't had a PAP smear in the last 3 years, make sure to book an appointment with your provider. PAP smears are typically free and covered by insurance, even if it's a high deductible plan. If you don't have insurance or are afraid the test won't be covered, consider contacting your local Cancer Services Program, who might be able to help you obtain these services for free. There are many programs out there that will cover the cost of a wellness visit, so be sure to call us if you have any questions; just ask for a member of the outreach team. If you haven't had your yearly "well woman" checkup, call today and schedule an appointment! Even if you already have a primary care provider, we at Finger Lakes Community Health are happy to help with your reproductive health services as well.



## Why is **FOLIC ACID** so important during pregnancy?

Folate is a water-soluble B vitamin found in foods or vitamins and is otherwise known as Folic Acid. It can be found in cold cereals, flour breads, leafy vegetables, beans, meat, orange juice, pasta, cookies, and bakery items. Folic Acid is commonly given as a vitamin to women who are pregnant or who plan to become pregnant as it is used to prevent miscarriage, neural tube defects, and other birth defects. Taking a prenatal vitamin with 400 microgram (mcg) of Folic Acid before pregnancy can help prevent these birth defects. It's important to know that birth defects occur within the first 3-4 weeks of pregnancy, often

before the mother even knows she is pregnant. Because this is such a crucial timeframe for fetal development it's essential that this vitamin supplement be used if you are actively attempting to conceive. After you have conceived and during the breastfeeding stage, you should continue to use Folic Acid. It's important to talk to your medical provider to see what dosage they recommend during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. So remember, until you do, check your vitamin bottle or stock up on those foods high in folic acid to increase your chances of healthy pregnancy!

# Provider Spotlight!

## Locations:

### Bath

**Community Health**  
117 E. Steuben St  
Bath, NY 14810  
(607) 776-3063

### Geneva

**Community Health**  
601B Washington St  
Geneva, NY 14456  
(315) 781-8448

### Newark

**Community Health**  
513 W. Union St  
Newark, NY 14513  
(315) 573-7577

### Ovid

**Community Health**  
7150 N. Main Street  
Ovid, NY 14521  
(607) 403-0065

### Penn Yan

**Community Health**  
112 Kimball Ave  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 536-2752

### Port Byron

**Community Health**  
60 Main St  
Port Byron, NY 13140  
(315) 776-9700

### Sodus

**Community Health**  
6692 Middle Rd  
Suite 2100  
Sodus, NY 14551  
(315) 483-1199

### Administrative Offices

14 Maiden Lane  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 531-9102

## Preconception care?

### What is it, and why do I need to know about it?



**Rebecca Martin, FNP**  
Finger Lakes Community Health

“According to the Center for disease control, “Preconception health care is the medical care a woman or man receives from the doctor or other health professionals that focuses on the parts of health that have been shown to increase the chance of having a healthy baby.” A pretty obvious definition I guess; but why is this so important? Per a CDC report, referring to an article from 2011, “In 2006, 49% of pregnancies were unintended...” Women most likely to have an unintended pregnancy include the following demographics: “unmarried women, black women, and women with less education or income”. These women are at a much higher risk of entering prenatal care later in their pregnancy, and this increases their chances of a poor outcome. The Office of Women’s Health reports that, “Babies of mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to die than those born to mothers who do get care.” To put this all in perspective, a 2014 study by the CDC ranked the US with the highest infant mortality rate of developed countries with 6.1 deaths per 1,000 births.

What can we do to change this? As primary care providers we are at the front line of care. Especially at FLCH, where our goal is to serve the underserved and special populations. As health professionals, we have an important role in preconception health and health care. Health professionals can support the three goals of preconception care by screening for risks (for example but not limited to: alcohol consumption, smoking, prescription and over-the-counter medication use, excess vitamin intake, and undernutrition), recommending interventions to address identified risks, and promoting health and providing education. (CDC, 2015). Most patients do not get scheduled with their OB/GYN until they are 10-12 weeks along, which is well into the most crucial fetal developmental stage. Be sure to ask your provider about preconception care, because that’s where it all begins. ”

## Where Are We (FLCH) This Month?

- **January 3rd:** Tier 2 Meeting, Penn Yan
- **January 5th & 6th:** Romulus School Education
- **January 9th:** W.A.R.E (Wayne Action for Racial Equality) Meeting
- **January 9th:** MLK Committee Meeting, Newark
- **January 10th-12th:** Midlakes High School Education
- **January 11th:** Community Agencies & Schools Together Meeting (CAAST), Geneva
- **January 16th:** Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration, Newark
- **January 18th:** Reproductive & Education Committee Meeting, Geneva Community Health. (10am)  
*\*Join us to help improve the reproductive health of our community and share resources!*
- **January 19th:** Southern Tier Sexual Health Meeting, Bath. (10am)  
Finger Lakes Sexual Health Meeting, Hopewell (2:15pm)
- **January 24th:** Wayne Wellness Meeting, Lyons

*\*Would you like us to visit your program or school to provide evidence based programming on pregnancy prevention, STI prevention, healthy relationships and more? For more information go to [www.localcommunityhealth.com](http://www.localcommunityhealth.com) or contact us today to schedule a time!*



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