

Prevention Initiatives

In the early 1990s, Memorial established the Community Benefit Fund and began the practice of “tithing,” a policy of reinvesting ten percent of the previous year’s excess operating revenue into community health improvement. From the outset, our principle tithing priority has been to improve the health of underserved populations by encouraging and funding development in the neighborhoods, schools and congregations of our community. Throughout this process, we have been especially interested in servicing the needs of seniors and children. *Prevention Initiatives* (PI) grew out of a strong partnership between Memorial Hospital and the South Bend Community School Corporation (SBCSC) that originated in several collaborative projects designed to benefit school-aged children. In the words of Memorial Hospital Vice-President Carl Ellison, “*Prevention Initiatives* is a story about how a health organization and a school system can build a relationship over time that results in products and projects that are mutually beneficial for their common goals.”

The initial effort, a five-year commitment that focused on school-aged children, involved a partnership with SBCSC that provided funding for school nurses and health aides (see School Health Partnership Program learning history). The goal of this effort, Ellison explains, was to build capacities into the system that would increase both the treatment available in schools and the efficiency with which treatment is administered: “This initiative was designed to free nurses from paperwork to allow them to focus more fully on the health of the children. The result is a more systematic capability in schools to reduce the number of school days lost to sickness.”

Prevention Initiatives became the second tier of the relationship between Memorial and SBCSC. At the forefront of these initiatives was a growing concern over the teen pregnancy rate (third highest in the state) and the infant mortality rate (higher than the state average) in St. Joseph County. These discouraging statistics strengthened our resolve to take an active part in developing prevention and abstinence programming for South Bend's middle schools. Today, there are four thriving programs in place that are designed to help our young people successfully avoid the temptations of premature sexual activity and substance abuse: (1) *Sex Can Wait*, (2) *Baby Think It Over*, (3) S.O.A.R. (Self, Others and Respect), and (4) *T.N.T.* (Towards No Tobacco). In addition, we offer a number of injury prevention programs to educate audiences from pre-school age to retirement in trauma safety.

Sex Can Wait_

In the fall of 1996, Memorial Hospital partnered with SBCSC to develop and implement an abstinence education program for eighth graders called *Sex Can Wait*. The program is based on the “Postponing Sexual Involvement” (PSI) curriculum developed by Marion Howard, Ph.D., and Marie Mitchell, R.N., of Emory University and Grady Health System, respectively. Community Partnership Manager and Prevention Initiatives developer Sharon Nieb took a leadership role in bringing the

program to fruition, a task that included involving the curriculum authors in the process. “We wanted a program that had proven to be successful,” Nieb explains, “and a national search of the literature revealed that PSI was one of the few abstinence programs that had been evaluated. Once we decided on using the PSI curriculum I convinced Dr. Howard that we were committed to excellence in replication and that we needed her assistance. In order to develop a program to its highest potential, training and guidance from the author is essential.”

The goals of *Sex Can Wait* are to help young people:

- understand the pressures in our society that influence their behavior
- understand their rights in social relationships
- avoid situations that might lead to sexual involvement
- deal with pressure situations through the use of assertive responses
- postpone sexual involvement.

The five-session program is designed for eighth graders in participating schools within St. Joseph County, and is presented by teen leaders (typically high-school juniors and seniors) who are recruited, trained, and supervised by Memorial staff. In addition, there is a two-session program for parents (conducted at various sites throughout St. Joseph County) that provides input on how to help their children become more aware of and more resistant to social pressures. The message is simple: through effective communication, parents can help their children find ways to achieve status, acceptance and respect without becoming prematurely sexually involved.

Baby Think It Over

In response to the resoundingly positive reception of *Sex Can Wait* in eighth grade classes, *Baby Think it Over (BTIO)* was initiated in 1997 as a compatible, voluntary-participation program for seventh graders. *Baby Think It Over* is designed to help early teens understand how having a baby would change their lives--before they find out the hard way. The program uses a life-size infant simulator with a small computer inside that approximates infant behavior; whenever the “baby” is hungry, sleepy, attention-deprived or in need of a diaper change, it “cries.” And just like a real parent, the person caring for the baby never knows when the crying might start. When it inevitably does, participants must attend to their babies by using special keys to stop the crying, while the simulator tracks their attentiveness. The program includes a one-and-a-half-day workshop at which the students name their “babies,” learn how to operate the simulators, and receive assignments (including an intensive journaling exercise) to carry out over a weekend with the simulator. Upon returning to class on Monday, participants spend a full day learning about the emotional, financial and educational consequences of teen pregnancy.

In SBCSC Director of Student Services Rosalind Ellison's opinion, *Baby Think It Over* has been extremely successful in providing its participants a truly formative experience. "At first," she explains, "we were worried about getting enough kids to run eight sessions; now we have students on waiting lists. The students think it's an exciting program. Many of them have seen their older siblings bring the dolls home and have actually been looking forward to participating in the program. Fortunately, once they spend a weekend with the dolls they usually come back and say they've had enough. This is what we want to have happen." Ellison has even had parents come to the school corporation and request that their children take the *BTIO* program. This trend of parental involvement and support is one that Ellison sees as crucial to all the *Prevention Initiative* programs: "Involved parents help to open the doors of communication to their children. Students can come home and talk to their parents about the information they receive during the program, and this kind of communication helps to reinforce the messages that we are trying to send."

Baby Think it Over was conducted for the first time in the South Bend Community School Corporation during the 1997-1998 school year. A pre- and post-evaluation was given to all participating students, and a total of 160 students completed the evaluation process. Over the past several years, program numbers have increased dramatically. In 2001, over 900 students in St. Joseph County participated in *Baby Think It Over*.

The positive results of pre- and post-evaluation surveys during the 1997-1998 school year provided SBCSC and Memorial with statistical information about the impact of the program and helped to instantiate the program throughout South Bend schools and eventually in other school systems as well. Both the pre- and post-evaluation surveys consisted of fifteen questions, and of these fifteen, nine were appropriate for analysis. Among the questions analyzed, six showed statistically significant change between the pre- and post-evaluation surveys using a t-test. Furthermore, when evaluating *Baby Think It Over*, nearly all students highly recommend that other students participate in the program. Some students, in fact, have promoted the program by creating posters.

What these findings show is that *Baby Think It Over* has a significant impact on the attitudes of teens enrolled in the program. In most cases, both the age at which students hope to have their first children and the number of children they plan to have changed significantly from the pre- to the post-evaluation. In addition, participants frequently changed their minds about the toll that having a baby can take on relationships between parents. The following list represents a sampling of the questions that participants are asked to consider:

- How important do you think it is to have a spouse or partner in raising a child?
- How do you think having a baby affects a couple's relationship?
- How important is it to you to reach your career goals before having a child?
- Overall, do you think caring for a baby is very easy, easy, neither easy nor difficult, or very difficult?

For more information and test results see our Website at <http://www.qualityoflife.org/learning.htm> (click “on-line learning histories” and look for *Baby Think It Over*).

S.O.A.R. (Self, Others & Respect)

In 1998, Memorial and SBCSC decided to implement a preteen version of *Sex Can Wait* called S.O.A.R. (Self, Others and Respect) in all 6th grade classes. This curriculum prepares younger students to resist the increased peer pressure they will face in entering middle school. S.O.A.R. uses the "Postponing Sexual Involvement" preteen curriculum that is authored by Dr. Marion Howard and Marie Mitchell. This curriculum is designed to involve preteens in thinking about, discussing, and practicing skills that will be helpful in managing their emerging sexual feelings. In addition, the program helps participants to resist social and peer pressures to become sexually involved as they mature into teenagers. To aid preteens in these areas, this series is designed to present information regarding:

- The general nature of puberty
- How to handle normal curiosity about sex
- The general nature of relationships
- The need for setting limits on physically expressing affection within relationships
- How to say "no" to social and peer pressures toward experimenting with sexual behavior

This same year Memorial began providing full-time Prevention Initiative staff, School Health Prevention Coordinators in each of the school systems. These Memorial employees are responsible for coordinating and executing all Prevention Initiatives programs. Angelica Cruz, a Memorial School Health Prevention Coordinator, describes her job as one that teaches students about abstinence and resisting peer pressure through various programs, including Sex Can Wait, Baby Think It Over, S.O.A.R. and TNT. “I think students feel comfortable talking to me. They must - they call me the Sex-Can-Wait-Lady or Baby-Think-It-Over-Lady,” Angelica explains. “The BTIO students are fun to watch. And you can see a big difference from Friday to Monday. When they get their babies on Friday they are very excited, when they come back on Monday they’re tired and drained. They really do get a good sense of the responsibility involved in caring for a child.”

As a result of Memorial's leadership in abstinence programming and the success of Dr. Howard's model, school corporations in New Prairie, LaVille, Elkhart, and Mishawaka began initiating programs. In addition, Michiana Regional Abstinence Partnership (MRAP) was formed with other school districts and health systems (including Lakeland, and Elkhart General). Programming now exists in over 15 school districts. The success of the abstinence initiative is founded on competing

health care systems working together to improve community health.

T.N.T. (Towards No Tobacco)

In 1999, a new program, "Towards No Tobacco" (TNT) was introduced into all SBCSC and Mishawaka 7th health classes. (In Indiana, 8th grade daily smokers exceed the national average by 66%.) TNT is CDC approved and research shows that it reduces smoking initiation by 25-30%.

The TNT program's theory is that young people will be best able to resist using tobacco products if they (1) are aware of misleading social information that facilitates tobacco use (e.g., advertising, inflating prevalence estimates); (2) have skills that counteract the social pressures to achieve approval by using tobacco; and, (3) appreciate the physical consequences that tobacco use may have on their own lives (e.g., the beginnings of addiction). Because the use of tobacco is a behavior caused by multiple factors, Project TNT is designed to target and counteract these different causes, from peer pressure to parental use. This comprehensive approach is well-suited to a wide variety of youth who may differ in risk factors that influence their tobacco use.

According to Angelica Cruz, a Memorial School Health Prevention Coordinator, "a lot of students really don't know what could happen to them as a result of smoking. They learn about the facts through TNT; it's extremely important that they understand the truth about smoking."

Injury Prevention

Injury prevention programs are delivered to populations identified through NTRACS (trauma registry). The implementation of injury prevention programs in North Central Indiana has helped Memorial strive toward attainment of Level II Trauma Center verification, as well as enhancing the existing community outreach efforts. Several programs have been initiated which address falls, helmet use / bicycle safety, and motor vehicle safety. Additional components of some of the programs include water safety, gun safety, recreational / sports safety, violence prevention and conflict resolution. Effective injury prevention programming began as a result of an injury prevention committee that included members of our community as well as hospital staff.

The Memorial Injury Prevention Committee selected the following programs for implementation during 2001:

Think First for Kids

Think First for Teens

Trauma Nurses Talk Tough About Saving Your Life

TraumaRoo Operation Home Safe Home

Since trauma is a disease that can affect any age group, committee members decided that repeated exposure to safety topics via multiple injury prevention programs would best meet the needs of our community. Think First for Teens programs have been presented to high school students in St. Joseph County for approximately ten years with accompaniment of an injured or paralyzed community member at each presentation. Presentations of Think First for Kids began in March, 2001, targeting kindergarten through third graders. Memorial will exceed the goal of reaching 1,600 kids by December 31, 2001. Think First and Trauma Nurses Talk Tough About Saving Your Life was presented to over 1,000 kids from March through June, 2001. The School Health Prevention Coordinators, presented Think First in more than seven schools. They work directly with students, teachers and principals of the South Bend, Mishawaka and Penn schools of St. Joseph County, Indiana to provide health prevention programs to the children of our community. Think First for Kids was implemented in March in the after school programs. Schedules were coordinated to allow Think First for Kids to be presented either in the spring or fall of 2001. Several of the School Health Prevention Coordinators were retained during the summer months to present programs to kids at the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, parks and community health fairs.

Trauma Nurses Talk Tough About Saving Your Life provides an opportunity to reach multiple age groups. Nurses and Paramedics present an interactive slide program to targeted audiences. The audience, regardless of age, tends to get involved by sharing experiences and asking questions to learn more about safety. According to Wendy Hums, RN, Trauma Program Manager/Outreach Coordinator, "Our most fulfilling experience with this program was definitely unexpected. Little did I know that while presenting the program to an audience of 10- to 12-year-olds at the YMCA (with a blind girl participating) we would have yet another golden opportunity to make an even bigger difference with our injury prevention efforts. When the young blind girl's mother learned from her daughter about the Trauma Nurses Talk Tough About Saving Your Life presentation her daughter participated in, she wanted to do something special for her. She enlisted the help of the local media to find a donor for a tandem bicycle and a helmet for her daughter. The YMCA personnel contacted Memorial Trauma Services to provide helmets to the group of children who attend a summer program that includes weekly bike rides. Only those who have helmets are allowed to join in the fun. Since our HealthWorks! Kids' Museum staff have partnered with Trauma Services to fit the helmets that are given out to those who attend our injury prevention programs, we were able to provide and fit nearly 30 kids with a helmet for their next Friday bike outing. The special opportunity in this event was to fit the young blind girl with a new helmet so she could enjoy the bike ride with her friends. The challenge of the slide presentation was to continuously provide a description of each picture so the blind girl could benefit from the program along with the other children. A very kind friend of the blind girl helped her complete the

evaluation form. This presentation took on a whole new meaning for me as a trauma nurse coordinator. I'll always remember the expression on her face and the questions she asked during my presentation. The personal gratification of knowing what a difference my presentation made in this child's life will be remembered forever."

Memorial will soon have a new member of our Memorial character family - Troo the Trauma Roo. Troo will be accompany Injury Prevention staff to day care centers, kindergarten classes and other community events where we present the American Trauma Society injury prevention programs. Troo and the injury prevention programs are being made possible through the support of our Community Health Alliance Group. The pediatric Intensive Care, Pediatric Transport (Mobile ICU) nurses and the Emergency Nurses will present the Trauma Roo programs in our community.

Beginning in the Fall of 2001, Memorial Trauma Services, HealthWorks! Kids' Museum and an epidemiologist from Indiana University of South Bend will begin a research project that will evaluate the effectiveness of a multifaceted injury prevention program in our community. Students in the second grade will receive a voucher for a free helmet after participating in a Think First or Trauma Nurses Talk Tough About Saving Your Life Program. The students will be given vouchers to receive a free helmet (and fitting) along with a free family admission to HealthWorks!. Helmets will be available for parental purchase (\$6.00) too. Siblings may receive helmets for free by participating in an interactive bicycle/helmet program at HealthWorks! Kids' Museum. Parents are included in this effort to participate as the role model to wear helmets. Short-term and long-term evaluations will occur for consenting participants. A Family Safety night will begin January, 2002 at HealthWorks! Kids' Museum. Nurses, paramedics and educators will present an injury prevention program once a month. Helmets and entry into HealthWorks! Kids' Museum will be promoted throughout the community.

SAFE KIDS Coalition of St. Joseph County was formed in March 2001 as a result of attending a Safe Community meeting. A local police officer, already offering Car Seat Training programs in Indiana, was looking for some assistance with starting a local SAFE KIDS coalition. "Realizing the importance of community support of injury prevention programs, I offered to mail out invitations and get involved as the co-coordinator. Invitations were sent to schools, community leaders, healthcare providers, police officers, EMS providers, firefighters and day care centers. Our kick-off event centered around Mayor Steven Luecke (South Bend, IN) and Mayor Robert Beutter (Mishawaka, IN) presenting SAFE KIDS awards to 8 children who had drawn pictures and described what summer safety meant to them," recalled Hums. Operation Home Safe Home is targeted for the Fall of 2001. The nursing staff of the Ortho/Neuro unit, Emergency Nurses, and Home Care nurses will be presenting home safety programs to the adult and senior citizens. Memorial is planning a community-wide blitz where members of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and children of

Memorial Hospital of South Bend will perform a safety assessment of a senior citizen's home to identify safety needs (excess scattered rugs, smoke detectors, medicines out of reach of children, etc.). Provision of home safety items where needed will be made possible through the support of the Memorial Community Health Alliance Group.

Memorial Trauma Services and Air Angels nurses and paramedics have partnered their resources to present one-to-two hour trauma programs that are part of a Trauma Education Series. Each program focuses on a specific body system affected by trauma. Wendy Hums and Trey Caraway, Memorial Air Angels South Bend Flight Program Manager, are coordinating, developing and presenting trauma programs throughout northern Indiana. Jan Howard, RN, MSN, is presenting a basic trauma class and one-hour topics from the Trauma Education Series to Memorial Staff. Due to the outstanding efforts of Ken Nemes, Transport Outreach Coordinator, flyers announcing the Trauma Education Series have been marketed to hospitals and EMS services throughout northern Indiana. The target audience for professional education includes nurses, paramedics, EMTs, physicians, and first responders. The programs are designed to meet the needs of healthcare professionals involved in the care of the trauma patient. A Basic Trauma Class taught by Howard is expanding the knowledge and skills of many staff within Memorial Hospital. Hums has brought the Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC) and the Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC) to the hospital, as well as marketing to and inviting nurses from other hospitals in Northern Indiana and Southwestern Michigan. Scott Thomas, MD, Medical Director of Trauma Services, is the Course Director for the ATLS courses being taught in St. Joseph County. Trauma Services and Memorial Air Angels personnel are also providing trauma education businesses and community groups upon request. Thanks to the commitment, dedication and hard work of staff, Memorial is making great contributions toward providing optimal care to the injured patient in North Central Indiana.

Prevention Initiatives Success

Implementation of Sex Can Wait, Baby Think It Over, S.O.A.R. and TNT continued to be successful in the SBCSC and Mishawaka school districts. During the 1999-2000 school year, Penn-Harrison-Madison school system began to offer the Prevention Initiatives programs as well. Continued success led to Teen Leader participation increasing from 45 in 1996 to over 120 in 1999. Moreover, as a result of Memorial and SBCSC's successful leadership in abstinence programming (both at the state and national levels), the Indiana State Department of Health awarded them over \$188,000 in grant funding for the 2000-2001 school year.

Evaluation of past school-based program implementation shows a significant impact is being made in the attitudes and beliefs of adolescents. Since 1996, teen births in the 15- to 17-year-old age range have been decreasing in St. Joseph County. School-based programs have been very well received by all school

districts. Staff and parents alike support the deepening and broadening of the message to resist peer pressure in making unhealthy choices. Lives of individual students and Teen Leaders have been significantly changed not only by the message, but by the mentoring relationships that have developed with Memorial staff. Schools are donating administration and staff time, office space and equipment. Perhaps most important, strong partnering relationships now exist with all St. Joseph County public school systems. Future possibilities are unlimited.

The table below illustrates just how the Prevention Initiatives have grown into the local school systems. Approximately 5,300 students at the SBCSC were involved in Prevention Initiatives in 2001; 3,800 students at Penn-Harris-Madison School system; and 1,300 in the Mishawaka school system.

School System	SOAR	TNT	PSI	BTIO	Total
SBCSC	1600	1600	1600	500	5300
PHM	1200	1200	1200	200	3800
Mishawaka	400	400	400	100	1300
Totals	3200	3200	3200	800	

Memorial Hospital Vice President Carl Ellison sums up the success of the Prevention Initiatives in observing that “the relationship between Memorial and the SBCSC has grown over time and reflects the possibilities that exist in relationship and community building when one begins with a single project and goes on to develop a continuum of services that is executed and supported by both the school system and the hospital. All of our tithing principles,” he concludes, “are demonstrated in this partnership.” Without the hard work and dedication of Sharon Nieb and Ros Ellison (the developers, administrators and point people between the two systems) Memorial and SBCSC would not have achieved the level of cooperation and program success they have today.

Memorial and its partners, staff, parents, and students had the following recommendations for anyone considering developing Prevention Initiatives:

- C Don't hesitate to talk to the school corporation - schools are much more receptive than most people think.
- C Go slow! Talk through all project implications with your school partner(s). Do your research and present the facts to your Board(s). It may take eight months to a year to gain support and buy-in.
- C Bring all the potential partners to the table - school administrators, hospital administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

- C Be patient and listen to all the partners. Don't give up if you run into stumbling blocks - work through whatever issues arise. You may have to back up, but that is to be expected.
- C Be clear about how and what you choose to evaluate. Partners should be in agreement about what methods will be used to evaluate the program. You don't want to alienate partners, parents, or students.
- C Obtain a professional program that is user friendly. Dr. Marion Howard's PSI program is a well-established and successful curriculum - it has a proven track record.
- C Use students as the "sellers" of the program - obtain buy-in from students and you will get the buy-in from their parents. To get a program off the ground make sure students are clear about what they are getting into.
- C Open communication on all levels is critical to program success. Communicating openly with your administrators, educators, teachers, parents and students builds trusting, healthy relationships for all involved.