

Dear Senior Center Director and Activities Coordinator:

As you plan activities for your center, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) urges you to consider including family health history.

Family health history is a tool to help older adults understand how genetics interacts with their environment and behaviors to impact their health and the health of younger family members. Knowing the health problems that run in one's family can guide lifestyle choices and screening tests to prevent or detect disease early.

Preliminary results from a survey of 300 Utah seniors conducted by Brigham Young University researchers show that, while many older adults understand the importance of knowing their family health history (81%), only 30% have actually collected one. The difficulty of obtaining sufficient information (24%); lack of time (16%); lack of interest (14%); and lack of family connectedness (10%) were perceived as the major barriers to gathering family health information.

To help seniors overcome these barriers, the Utah Department of Health has developed a family health history packet for senior centers. This packet is designed to help teach your clients how to collect a family health history and why it is important to share the information with younger family members. Included in the Senior Center Packet you will find:

- What Your Senior Center Can Do
- Senior-friendly Family Health History Toolkit
- Health Family Tree box
- Family Health History PowerPoint presentation
- Traits Bingo game
- Ten Questions to Ask Your Family handout
- Fun Ideas handout
- Newsletter article
- Poster
- Tell us your story handouts

If you have questions on how to use this packet, please contact the UDOH Chronic Disease Genomics Program at 801-538-9416 or by e-mail at [genomics@utah.gov](mailto:genomics@utah.gov). Or visit our Web site at [www.health.utah.gov/genomics](http://www.health.utah.gov/genomics).

We wish you the best!

UDOH Chronic Disease Genomics Program