



FOOD JOURNAL

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CHANGES IN STORE FOR WIC FOOD PACKAGES

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued proposed changes to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). See the 08/07/06 *Federal Register* for the complete notice. The revisions improve the nutritional value of the WIC food packages, last updated in 1980.

In 2005, at USDA's request, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report with recommendations for a revised set of WIC food packages to reflect current nutritional science. Per USDA's request, IOM's recommendations were intended to be cost neutral. Many of the IOM proposed changes were consistent with recommendations made by Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and others in public comment letters and meetings as part of the review process.

USDA's proposed WIC food packages increase participants' choices, improve the health and nutritional quality of the foods in the program, and expand cultural food options by offering fruits and vegetables, whole grain bread (with the option to substitute corn tortillas, whole grain rice or other whole grains) and the option of soymilk and tofu. In addition, the proposal includes package enhancements that will better promote breastfeeding (such as allowing canned salmon instead of tuna) and expand support for medically fragile participants. USDA has proposed

allowing state agencies to authorize farmers at Farmers Markets to accept WIC vouchers for fruits and vegetables from WIC participants.

FRAC will continue to support the implementation of a healthy food package, emphasizing the importance of USDA considering the comments fully, making the necessary changes and quickly moving forward with the process to better serve the eight million women, infants and children in the program.

FRAC will produce a more detailed summary of the proposed WIC food package and a model

LOSS OF FUNDING

For years, the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA) has received federal Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) funds through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to operate several hunger relief initiatives, including the *Food Journal*. TACAA has published the *Food Journal* for two decades. However, due to the elimination of CFNP during the last federal budget appropriation process, production of the *Food Journal* will soon end. To date, alternative funding has not materialized. TACAA will continue to produce the *Food Journal* as long as funding allows. We will keep you posted.

comment letter. The rule has a 90 day comment period. Contact Geri Henchy at FRAC for more information: ghenchy@frac.org, 202/986-2200, ext. 3025.

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) supports the increased flexibility of choice offered by the proposed WIC package. “These changes will better meet the needs of WIC recipients and reflect the growing cultural diversity of the WIC population,” ADA spokesperson Lona Sandon said. “For example, allowing women to choose or substitute enriched soy beverages or tofu for dairy milk will help people with a milk protein allergy meet their calcium needs,” Sandon said.

The IOM’s report, WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change, can be accessed at www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/18047/26667/28119.aspx. For more information about the changes to the WIC food packages, go to www.frac.org or www.eatright.org.

STUDY FINDS LACK OF HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS IN CHICAGO

A recent study of Chicago neighborhoods by Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group, *Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago*, found that the nearly 500,000 Chicago residents who live in neighborhoods with no or distant grocery stores, and who often experience an imbalance of healthy food options, are more susceptible to premature death and chronic health conditions.

Commissioned by LaSalle Bank to better understand challenges faced by Chicago’s underserved neighborhoods, the study researched the link between access to healthy food and public health. Of the 77 official community areas to which Chicago is home, the study found 25 contain areas that are part of food deserts — large geographic areas with no or distant grocery stores. It also found that nearly 400,000 Chicagoans are impacted by the Food Balance Effect, an inability to choose fresh, healthy food options

due to few or distant grocery stores. These communities were found to have increased rates of both premature diet-related deaths and greater rates of chronic health conditions.

In an effort to find a solution to the issues identified by the study, Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago — an organization working to stimulate the development of healthy, stable neighborhoods — hosted, and LaSalle Bank sponsored, the Stranded in the Food Desert forum on July 18 in Chicago. The Forum gathered representatives from city government, healthcare, planning, public health, community development and grocery retail sectors to hear the findings and respond to the report.

At the forum, panelists agreed the research will help build awareness and bring opportunity to the areas in need of improvement. Further, increasing access to healthy food options is a shared responsibility and permanent solutions require collaboration and partnership between all members of the community.

For an executive summary and web cast, visit www.lasallebank.com. For the full report, call Lauren Vidovich at 312/904-8006.

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

As students get back to school, schools are starting the school year with a new focus on wellness. This year, for the first time, school districts are federally required to have wellness policies in place to address nutrition education, guidelines for foods in school, physical education, and physical activity. Action for Healthy Kids, a national grassroots partnership leading the Campaign for School Wellness, is committed to providing parents with the resources and information to get involved in this process.

Data overwhelmingly indicate that parents want the benefits that wellness policies can deliver for children’s health and learning. A recent survey of parents by the National Parent Teacher Association indicates that only one in five par-

ents are likely to be involved in developing and implementing their child's school wellness policy; however, a strong majority of parents (65%) said a school nutrition/physical activity policy is important to them. Action for Healthy Kids surveyed parents nationwide at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year about school wellness practices and found most parents feel their children's schools should incorporate more healthy food choices in school vending machines and cafeteria lines, daily breakfast, daily physical education for all students, daily recess, and after-school programs that promote healthy snacks and physical activity.

Actions parents can take:

1. Parents can visit their child's school and ask for a copy of the new Wellness Policy.
2. Join their child in the cafeteria and eat a school lunch to see firsthand what healthy options are available.
3. Make an appointment with the school principal or other administrator and ask the following questions:
 - How many days do students participate in physical education class?
 - Which after-school programs include opportunities to be physically active and have a healthy snack?
 - What types of food are sold to students outside of the school meal program?
 - What can I do to improve nutrition and physical activity for my children during the school day?

***For more information, visit
www.ActionForHealthyKids.org.***

SURGE IN CHILD POVERTY

While overall child poverty in the U.S. has risen dramatically since 2000, a new report by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) reveals that children and families in some regions have been harder hit than others. The re-

port, *The New Poor: Regional Trends in Child Poverty*, finds the greatest increase in child poverty among working families in the Midwest.

Although child poverty has increased 12% nationally since 2000, the rise in the Midwest was a stunning 29% — by far the most substantial of any region. Accounting for nearly half of the increase nationwide, the Midwest was the only region where poverty increased among children with employed parents, due in part to the loss of relatively well-paid manufacturing jobs.

Child poverty increased in the Northeast by 11% and in the South by 9%. In the Northeast, the increase was greatest among white children, whereas in the South, the most substantial increase was among children of immigrants. The child poverty rate in the West remained virtually unchanged.

The report calls for policy solutions that both strengthen regional economies and address the wide-ranging problems associated with low-wage work. NCCP points to a number of immediate policy changes that would improve conditions for low-wage workers and their children, including raising the minimum wage, enacting or expanding state earned income tax credits, restoring immigrants' access to health care, and strengthening Unemployment Insurance.

When the Census Bureau releases the newest poverty statistics at the end of August, NCCP will ascertain if these trends continued in 2005.

To read the full report, visit www.nccp.org.

The Food Journal is available by electronic notification by e-mailing foodjournal@taca.org.

Archived issues of the Food Journal are available on-line at www.taca.org.

The Food Journal welcomes your comments and ideas for stories. Call 800/992-9767, ext. 206, or e-mail comments and suggestions to foodjournal@taca.org.

TEN TIPS FOR PACKING A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH

With the new school year starting up, the Center for Science in the Public Interest has provided ten easy tips to give a child's lunchbox a nutrition makeover:

1. Choose 1% or fat-free milk instead of whole or 2% milk to keep children's hearts healthy and arteries clear.
2. Leave the cheese off sandwiches, unless it is low-fat or fat-free cheese. Healthier sources of calcium include lower-fat cheese, fat-free and 1% milk, low-fat yogurt, and calcium-fortified orange juice.
3. Switch from fatty luncheon meats to low-fat or fat-free alternatives.
4. Include at least one serving of fruit in every lunch. Try serving fruit cut into slices, cubed, or with a yogurt sauce.
5. Sneak vegetables — like lettuce or slices of cucumber, tomato, green pepper, roasted peppers, or zucchini — onto sandwiches.
6. Use whole grain bread instead of white bread for sandwiches. If the main flour listed on the label is "wheat" or "unbleached wheat flour," the product is not whole grain.
7. Limit sweet baked goods. Fat-free sweets can still crowd out healthier foods like fruit.
8. Limit chips. Fruits and veggies should be the main side dish packed in lunch boxes.
9. Make sure fruit juices are 100% juice (listed on the label). Many are just sugar water with a tiny bit of added juice.
10. Many prepackaged kids' lunches get most of their calories from fat and sugar. Make a healthy alternative using whole-grain crackers, low-fat lunch meat, a piece of fruit and a box of 100% juice.

Visit www.cspi.org for more information.

NATION'S LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS DEVELOPING HEALTHIER SCHOOLS

From Los Angeles, CA, to Brownsville, TX, most of the nation's 100 largest school districts (by enrollment) are requiring nutrition education, adding recess and tightening nutrition standards. Of these districts, which educate 23% of American students, more than 94% have passed a local wellness policy addressing nutrition standards for a la carte foods and beverages, according to analysis conducted by the School Nutrition Association (SNA).

Section 204 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required all school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program approve a local wellness policy by July 1, 2006. The law mandated that these policies include goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available on school campuses.

The following summary outlines key characteristics of local wellness policies approved by the largest 100 school districts by enrollment in the U.S. SNA is collecting and analyzing wellness policies based on 79% of those school districts that have passed policies as of August 7, 2006.

Although the top 100 school districts make up less than 1% of the school districts in the nation, they account for 16% of the schools, 21% of the teachers and 23% of the nation's K-12 students, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Nutrition Standards for all Foods and Beverages Available in Schools

- 98.7% address school meal nutrition standards. (Note: the U.S. Department of Agriculture has set federal nutrition standards for meals served through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.)

- 94.9% address nutrition standards for a la carte foods and beverages.
- 92% address nutrition standards for foods and beverages available in vending machines.
- 11.5% specify each individual food or beverage item within a la carte and vending programs have a maximum of 30% calories from fat, 10% calories from saturated fat and 35% sugar by weight.
- 23% address food safety and/or Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems.
- 66.6% address nutrition standards/guidelines for fundraisers held during school hours.
- 61.5% address nutrition standards/guidelines for classroom celebrations or parties.
- 65% address nutrition standards/guidelines for teachers using foods as rewards in the classroom.

Physical Activity

Of the local wellness policies approved by the top 100 school districts:

- 51% of school districts address a recess requirement for at least elementary grade levels.
- 78% require physical activity for at least some grade levels.

Nutrition Education

- 85.8% require nutrition education for at least some grade levels.

Other School-Based Activities

- 19% incorporate staff wellness programs into school district policies. These programs encourage teachers and school staff to serve as role models in regard to wellness behaviors.

- 11.5% address nutrition standards for meals provided for field trips.

Implementation and Evaluation

- 94.8% outlined a plan for implementation and evaluation, utilizing the superintendent, school nutrition director or wellness policy task force as the entity responsible for monitoring the policy. The challenge for all local communities will be implementation of their policy.

Other components and programs mentioned in the policies of the top 100 districts were school gardens (6%) and requiring adequate time for students to eat lunch (17.9%).

Policy Approval

- 79% have approved a local wellness policy as of August 7, 2006.
- 10% have not yet approved a local wellness policy. In each of these cases, the school boards have scheduled a final vote on a draft policy for the upcoming weeks.
- 11% have not yet submitted a policy to be part of the top 100 school districts assessment.

***For the entire report, visit
[www.schoolnutrition.org/
Index.aspx?id=2077](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=2077).***

FOOD PROVIDERS NEED MORE

Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc. (TACAA) maintains a statewide database of Food Assistance Providers (FAPs). TACAA utilizes this database to place donations received through the Share Our Surplus and Hunters for the Hungry programs, as well as to keep abreast of hunger relief efforts in the state.

During the fall of 2005, TACAA designed and distributed a FAP needs assessment survey.

The FAP survey was sent to 3,869 organizations, with a total of 1,304 responses received. The highlights of the survey include:

- 63% of food providers felt they currently do not distribute enough food to meet demand,
- 23% said they were forced to turn people away during the past year because they lacked enough food, and of these, over half (52%) felt they needed more food of all types with “protein” being the most needed food group (84% needed more) followed by “fruits” (60% needed more), and
- 66% felt the demand for food would increase over the next year.

For more information on TACAA’s hunger relief programs, go to www.tacaa.org.

CALENDAR

October 9-13, 2006 National School Lunch Week celebrated. The School Nutrition Association (SNA) invites students across the country to ‘Vote for School Lunch.’ Students can learn more about the candidates and cast their vote at www.VoteForSchoolLunch.org until 10/06/06.

February 25-27, 2007 Food Research and Action Center will hold the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. Updates at www.frac.org.

PUBLICATIONS

An Advocate’s Guide to the Disaster Food Stamp Program released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), highlights how responding quickly, planning ahead, utilizing technology, and conducting outreach are important ways public agencies and social service providers can assist with disaster relief and connect needy families to valuable nutrition programs. The guide is a revised version of a prior FRAC publication that builds on the lessons learned in 2005. Go to www.frac.org/pdf/dfspguide06.pdf to download the guide.

TEXAS REGISTER

- **Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**, 08/11/06, p. 6305. Texas State Board of Examiners of Dietitians (TSBED) proposes an amendment concerning the licensure and regulation of dietitians. The amendment updates the rule to reflect current legal, policy, and operational considerations; clarifies the requirement that license holders must complete the Texas Jurisprudence Examination; and the improved draftsmanship makes the rule more accessible, understandable, and usable. Comments must be submitted by 09/10/06 to Bobbe Alexander, Executive Secretary, TSBED, DSHS, 1100 West 49th St., Austin, TX 78756 or e-mailed to dietitian@dshs.state.tx.us. The earliest possible date of adoption is 09/10/06. For more information, call 512/458-7111 x 6972.

FEDERAL REGISTER

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**, 07/19/06, p. 40985. This notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collections regarding disclosure of Children’s Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk Eligibility Information in the Child Nutrition Programs. Written comments must be received by 09/18/06 to Melissa Rothstein, Chief, Program Analysis and Monitoring Branch, Child and Nutrition Division, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), USDA, 3101 Park Center Dr., Rm. 640, Alexandria, VA 22302-1594, by fax to 703/305-2879, or via e-mail to melissa.rothstein@fns.usda.gov. For additional information, contact Ms. Rothstein at the address above or call 703/305-2590.
- **USDA**, 07/19/06, p. 40987. This notice invites the general public to comment on the proposed information collection for the SFSP Claim for Reimbursement Form, FNS-143, to collect data to determine the amount of reimbursement sponsoring organizations participating in the Summer Food Service Program are eligible to receive. Written comments must be

received by 09/18/06 to Melissa Rothstein (see previous notice for contact information).

- **USDA**, 07/19/06, p. 40988. This notice invites the general public to comment on the proposed information collections regarding the Claims for Reimbursement, FNS-806-A and FNS-806-B, to collect data to determine the amount of reimbursement school food authorities participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Special Milk Program for Children (SMP) are eligible to receive. Written comments must be received by 09/18/06 to Melissa Rothstein (see previous notice for contact information).
- **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**, 07/24/06, p. 41818. This notice solicits comments on the information collection provisions of the regulation requiring manufacturers, packers, and distributors of dietary supplements to notify the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that they are marketing a dietary supplement product that bears on its label or in its labeling a statement provided for in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Submit written comments, referencing Docket No. 2006N-0277, by 09/22/06 to: www.fda.gov/dockets/ecomments or mail to the Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), FDA, 5630 Fishers Ln., Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. For more information, call Jonna Capezzuto at 301/827-4659.
- **USDA**, 08/01/06, p. 43371. This rule proposes to amend regulations for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) by adding three requirements mandated by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 concerning retail vendors authorized by WIC State agencies to provide supplemental food to WIC participants in exchange for WIC food instruments. The intent of these provisions is to enhance due process for vendors; prevent defective infant formula from being consumed; and ensure the WIC Program does not pay the cost of incentive items provided by above-50% vendors in the form of high food prices. Comments, referencing Docket No. 0584-AD47, must be received by 10/02/06 to Patricia N. Daniels, Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Dr., Rm. 528, Alexandria, VA, 22302, www.fns.usda.gov/wic, or wichq-sfpd@fns.usda.gov. For more information, call Debra Whitford at 703/305-2746 or e-mail Debbie.Whitford@fns.usda.gov.
- **USDA**, 08/07/06, p. 44783. This proposed rule revises regulations governing WIC food packages to align them with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and current infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics, better promote and support the establishment of successful long-term breastfeeding, provide WIC participants with a wider variety of food, provide WIC State agencies with greater flexibility in prescribing food packages to accommodate participants with cultural food preferences, and serve participants with certain qualifying conditions under one food package to facilitate efficient management of medically fragile participants. Comments, referencing Docket No. 0584-AD77, must be postmarked by 11/06/06 to Patricia N. Daniels (see previous notice for contact information). For more information, call Debra Whitford at 703/305-2746 or e-mail Debbie.Whitford@fns.usda.gov.
- **USDA**, 08/11/06, p. 46074. This rule makes changes to the regulations governing State Administrative Expense funds for the Child Nutrition Programs to reflect amendments made by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 to the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. This rule implements a provision of the Act that increases the minimum State Administrative Expense grant for each State administering NSLP, SBP and/or SMP from \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year, adjusted by an index beginning in fiscal year 2009. This rule is effective 09/11/06. Call Melissa Rothstein for more information at 703/305-2595.



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