Federal Child Nutrition Policy: Improving Healthfulness of School Meals & Advocacy

Lorelei DiSogra, Ed.D., R.D.
Vice President – Nutrition and Health

United Fresh
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Federal Players – Key Roles

Congress

White House

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“Let’s Hear it for Vegetables! Yay! “Let’s Hear it for Fruit! Yeah!”

First Lady Michelle Obama Leads Cheers for Eating More Fruits & Vegetables at Ground Breaking for White House Garden
Congress - 2010 Child Nutrition Act

- All Child Nutrition Programs reauthorized every 5 yrs
- Congress extended all child nutrition programs for one year, pending full 5 year reauthorization
- Congress is expected to take up child nutrition legislation in winter/spring 2010
  - Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
  - House Committee on Education and Labor
- Challenge for Congress - finding the funding necessary to increase the reimbursement rates to enable schools to serve healthier meals
President Obama and White House

FY’11 Budget Request Asks for $1B/yr increase for program reforms aimed at improving program access, enhancing nutritional quality of school meals, nutrition research/evaluation

The White House and Mrs. Obama have highlighted need to increase access to healthier school foods: fresh fruits, vegetables, etc.
IOM School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children

Major Findings: Increase the Amount, Variety of Fruits & Vegetables in School Meals

- School breakfast: Double the amount of fruit; emphasis on whole fruit
- School lunch: Double amount of fruits and vegetables; increase the variety of vegetables (dark green/orange veggies) served; require both fruit and vegetables be served; school salad bars have positive effects on fruit and vegetable consumption; serve less potatoes and corn
- Recommends students must select at least 1 Fruit at breakfast and at least 1 Fruit or Veggie at lunch.
- Serving school meals that meet new recommendations will increase costs. Implementation will require increased funding for: (1) higher federal meal reimbursement (2) capital investment in equipment and (3) staff training.
- Additional cafeteria equipment will be needed in most schools to serve healthier school meals
- Nutrition education can promote behavior change
Child Nutrition Priorities

- **Increase reimbursement rate** for school meals to enable schools to serve healthier foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains consistent with Dietary Guidelines and IOM.

- Promote policies to **encourage fruit and vegetable salad bars** in school cafeterias; provide training and TA.

- Provide funds for **infrastructure investments in school cafeteria equipment** to enable schools to serve healthier meals.

- Significantly expand commodity **purchasing of fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables**.

- **Update nutrition standards** for school meals and update nutrition standards for competitive foods within 2 years.
A Salad Bar in Every School

School Salad Bars are the simplest, most direct and most effective way to increase student’s access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
HR 4333 Children’s Fruit & Vegetable Bill

Increasing Access to Fruits and Vegetables in School Cafeterias

The bill would direct USDA Secretary:

- To promote salad bars to schools as an evidence-based strategy to increase kids consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Providing training, TA and incentives
- To provide funds for cafeteria equipment and salad bar equipment
- Provide funding for Farm to School

Congressman Sam Farr

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Policy Change Requires Political Will

Building Broad Bi-Partisan Congressional Support for Policy Change Requires: Making the Issue Local, Effective Communications, Relentless Marketing, Strong Grassroots Advocacy – one member of Congress at a time.
Communications – “The ASK”

- Clear
- Specific
- Actionable
- Local and Personal