

HEALTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK  
HEALTH POLICY CABINET  
MAY 7, 2010

In attendance: Dave Geck, Lake County Office of Education; April Cunningham, NCO Head Start; Stan Janiak, NCO Head Start; Jennifer McClendon, Network for a Healthy California; Nice Alterman, Facilitator; Susan Jen and Jackie Armstrong, Health Leadership Network.

Nice explained that the purpose of today's meeting was to review existing fitness and nutrition policies used by HLN partners and identify the elements that could be adopted by other county agencies and institutions. Susan added that developing cross-agencies policies is part of the MOU work plan signed by partners. As an example, the Health Policy Cabinet could extract generic tenets of Head Start's Healthy Food Policy so that other partners could modify it as necessary and present to their individual governing bodies for approval. Development and adoption of nutrition and fitness policies will ensure that organizational priorities are not lost regardless of leadership changes.

The policies identified, and roughly prioritized, during the ensuing discussion included:

1. Vending Machine Policy - may represent 'low hanging fruit' because there is only one supplier in Lake County and this vendor has already transitioned to providing healthier options for school site vending machines.

Jennifer said that her office recently completed a survey of other countywide vending machine ordinances, in preparation for a similar effort in Sonoma County, finding that many jurisdictions utilized a 50%-75%-100% transition model and that vending machines ordinances are difficult to enforce.

April commented that there were many reasons for public policies to support kids' policies. Susan agreed, saying that studies indicate greater success when the environment supports healthy choices. Dave supported the idea of allowing options during a transition period saying that schools are used to dealing with state mandates while the private sector is not.

Nice suggested finding out what kind of impact the transition to healthier choices have on the vendor's business.

**Action Item:** Jackie will contact the vending machine company to find out about the impact on his business and, if possible, what percentage of sales represents revenue to customers. Absent the vendor's cooperation, Dave will try to assist in contacting district business managers to find out what financial arrangements are in place. Jennifer mentioned that her office is still researching the amount of revenue generated for Sonoma County by vending machine sales.

Susan said that she found, during her own survey of county and hospital vending machines, that there are some healthy choices but also some very unhealthy foods and suggested that "shelf talkers" in the machines may encourage people to choose one over the other. Jennifer said that

Sonoma County is implementing 100% healthy choice options believing that people who insist on consuming junk food are able to bring it from home or purchase it at omnipresent convenience stores.

It was suggested that the vending machine standards included in school wellness policies could be used as a baseline. Dave added that the different districts adopted pretty much the same standards so it would only be necessary to look at one.

**Action Item:** Susan will extract vending machine standards from a representative school district wellness policy.

Jennifer said that pending state legislation would eliminate the sale of electrolyte beverages at school sites.

## 2. Worksite Wellness Policy

Jennifer suggested reviewing the 'Fit Business Kit' that was developed as part of the Worksite Wellness program and includes several worksite wellness policies including one for vending machines. Work place activity standards may easily translate to HLN partners.

## 3. Eat Fresh, Buy Lake County Grown Window Clings

Susan suggested involving local Chambers of Commerce in promotion of "Eat Fresh, Buy Lake County Grown" window clings to local restaurants.

## 4. Healthy Menu Labeling

Susan suggested encouraging local restaurants to include heart healthy and, perhaps, locally grown symbols on their menus. Jennifer said that there is an effort in San Diego County to encourage restaurants to offer fresh fruit and vegetable options for children in place of French fries. Susan added that restaurants may already be offering healthy options and just need to be encouraged to identify and promote them.

In response to Nice's question as to how policy influenced the private sector, Susan said that it would have to be a voluntary effort with the Health Policy Cabinet setting a standard, for example, that restaurants offer at least one healthy meal option. Dave said that participation by restaurants in the policy-setting process would be critical for success. April added that promoting locally-grown items on the menu would be a logical next step to follow the window clings.

In response to a general consensus that fast food restaurants represent another level of effort, Dave said that he believed many fast food operations were already responding to market pressure by trying to make menu items look healthful.

## 5. Physical Activity Prescriptions

Dave (?) said that he was aware of activity prescriptions for osteoporosis being written for discounted and/or free entry to public parks and private fitness centers. Susan said that she knew of at least one physician who would be very supportive of writing those kinds of prescriptions.

Dave also recommended, considering catastrophic budget shortfalls and increasing reliance on community volunteers for school activity programs, that it might be most practical to simply promote community use of school facilities, such as moms walking on track fields.

#### 6. Shelf Talkers

Susan said that she was very interested in promoting buying local food products and healthy food choices through the use of shelf talkers in local grocery stores.

#### TIP SHEETS

A two-sided tip sheet was circulated for review. One side had information about implementation of an online application system for food stamps and the other side included nutritional information. Susan said that HLN planned to produce and distribute a series of tip sheets during the current year that would include information about local resources for families, Farmers' Markets schedules, food labeling, etc.

The following suggestions were made regarding the tip sheet distributed for review:

- The foods listed in the cost comparison chart should be ranked by number of calories with lettuce first and the blueberry muffins last. This would help distinguish healthy vs. unhealthy choices.
- Fiber requirements should be identified as "minimum" and the requirement for children should be added (age plus 5, according to April).
- Plant starts should be added to food seeds as being an eligible expense for food stamps.

Suggested distribution outlets included:

- Head Start programs (in the future since they end in 5 days)
- Meals on Wheels
- Schools
- Summer School Programs
- NCO Childcare Providers
- Free/Reduced Lunch Applicants
- Tribal Health
- Clinics
- Grocery Stores

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.