



Society for Nutrition Education Public Policy Legislative & Regulatory Bulletin July 2002

This newsletter highlights key legislative and regulatory news about nutrition education issues in Washington, D.C. This report is prepared by SNE's Public Policy Consultant, Waterman & Associates.

SNE Participates in Nutrition Education Workshop in Preparation for Next Year's Child Nutrition Reauthorization – Marilyn Briggs, SNE President, and other SNE members traveled to Washington, D.C. in June to participate in a one-day meeting to develop policy recommendations on the critical elements of effective nutrition education programs for inclusion in next year's reauthorization of child nutrition programs. The meeting, organized by some SNE members and the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA), brought together nearly 30 participants representing a variety of food and nutrition professional organizations and advocacy groups interested in strengthening child nutrition education.

Participants heard from USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) officials on current efforts and emerging opportunities relating to nutrition education in FNS programs. An overview and history of FNS nutrition education programs, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of these programs were highlighted in their remarks. A copy of the FNS power point presentation is attached to this update. The FNS's recommendations for the child nutrition reauthorization, can be found at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/outreach_report.htm.

In addition, participants learned about the key components of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Programs. This initiative assists states in encouraging physical activity and providing young people with information and skills needed to avoid risk behaviors, including poor eating habits. This program receives \$10.6 million annually and currently supports 20 states for coordinated school health programs.

The afternoon portion of the meeting was devoted to discussing ideas for strengthening child nutrition education and developing policy recommendations regarding child nutrition education. The group developed some of the following program recommendations:

- β Allocate adequate funding to reflect nutrition education as a priority;
- β Develop and implement evaluation and reporting components;
- β Create key nutrition coordinators at the federal, state and local levels and identify clear roles and responsibilities; and,
- β Provide funding for new and existing staff.

The suggestions and ideas developed from this initial meeting will be used as a focal point for future meetings and will aid in the development of a white paper on child nutrition education to be drafted by NANA.

Bill to Reduce Obesity Introduced in U.S. Senate – Before leaving for the August congressional recess, Senators Bill Frist (R-TN), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT) introduced comprehensive legislation aimed at reducing obesity, particularly among children and adolescents. The measure, "**Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act**" (IMPACT) (S. 2821), recognizes the significant problems associated with obesity including heart disease, diabetes and cancer and works to reduce those problems by encouraging better nutrition and more physical activity.

The measure would spend as much as \$217 million to give health professionals more training on weight issues, fund new parks, bike paths and recreational centers and provide more money for already-existing nutrition and exercise programs in schools. However, there are no designated funds for this bill in this year's Senate Agriculture and/or Health and Human Services Appropriations bill that fund these agencies. Sponsors and supporters of the bill will have work to secure the necessary funds (appropriations) in 2003. S. 2821 has been referred to the Senator Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee for consideration. There is no companion bill in the House of Representatives.

The legislation would:

- Authorize \$10 million in fiscal year 2003 to help provide training for health professionals and health science students on identifying those at risk for overweight and obesity and the treatment and prevention of these conditions. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in fiscal year (FY) 2003-2007.
- Authorize \$40 million in FY 2003 to assist local communities in promoting good nutrition and increased levels of physical activity among their citizens. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in FY 2003-2007.
- Authorize \$40 million in FY 2003 to assist state departments of education and schools to develop curricula to help students learn to make healthy choices pertaining to nutrition and physical activity. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in FY 2003-2007.
- Direct the Institutes of Medicine to look at the federal government food assistance programs to insure that they are a source for improved nutrition. Authorizes \$750,000 in FY 2003 and 2004.
- Authorize \$125 million to assist CDC and state governments to provide information to the public on healthy eating and physical activity with an emphasis on youth. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in FY 2003-2007.
- Authorize \$40 million to assist clinics that serve minority populations that are disproportionately affected by weight disorders to implement obesity prevention and treatment programs. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in FY 2003-2007.
- Ask the Department of Health and Human Services to summarize what research on overweight and obesity has revealed to date and to design a future research agenda.
- Set up a foundation that would allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct research on human nutrition so that government food programs can be more effective.

Authorizes \$500,000 in FY 2003 to help provide information to the public about the safety and effectiveness of popular weight reduction programs and diets. Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized in FY 2003-2007.

To review a copy of the legislation, click on to this web site: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c107:./temp/~c107Gpj3yZ>

President Bush Launches Healthier US Initiative – On June 20th, President Bush introduced his HealthierUS Initiative, which is based on the premise that increasing personal fitness and becoming healthier is critical to achieving a better and longer life. The President's HealthierUS Initiative uses the resources of the federal government to alert Americans to the vital health benefits of simple and modest improvements in physical activity, nutrition and behavior.

The Administration has identified four key components for a healthier America:

- β **Be Physically Active Every Day.** The administration's recommendations to promote physical activity include declaring a fee-free weekend in America's national parks and federal lands; creating a HealthierUS.gov Web site (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/fitness>); promoting the use of public lands and water; and highlighting the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.
- β **Eat a Nutritious Diet.** The administration recommends that Americans should make simple adjustments to their diet and avoid excessive portions. To promote better nutrition, the administration aims to enhance the National 5 A Day Program; promote nutrition curriculum and education in schools; and support the Eat Smart-Play Hard Campaign.
- β **Get Preventive Screenings.** In order to promote preventive medicine, the administration wants to create the Healthy Communities Innovation Initiative; raise awareness of diabetes screening, especially for women; and strengthen and improve Medicare.
- β **Make Healthy Choices.** The administration's recommendations to promote healthy choices include creating a CDC Tobacco Control Toolkit; highlighting the Drug Free Communities Support Program; and promoting Bicycle Safety Initiatives.

The Administration announced two specific actions to promote fitness under the HealthierUS Initiative:

- β **The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** is an important step in communicating the Administration's message on fitness and health. The Council will coordinate its activities with federal, state and private entities to serve communities across the country more effectively.
- β **Agency-Wide Activities to Promote Personal Fitness.** The President signed an Executive Order that directs certain federal agencies to review all policies, programs and regulations related to physical activity, nutrition, screenings and making healthy choices.

Obesity Issue Recognized by Governors and Congress – In July, the National Governor's Association (NGA) released a report that discusses the implications of the increased obesity problem. The report, "The Obesity Epidemic – How States Can Trim the Fat," points out that poor nutrition and physical inactivity are the leading causes of obesity and offers the best opportunities for prevention and treatment.

The NGA's report comes at the time when Congress is also recognizing the implications of the epidemic level of obesity and the health care costs associated with obesity. For a full copy of the report, click on to the NGA web site: <http://www.nga.org/cda/files/OBESITYIB.pdf>

New CDC Director Named – *Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, an infectious disease expert, was named to head the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, headquartered in Atlanta. Dr. Gerberding had been acting principal deputy director of CDC and had also served as acting deputy director of the Center's National Center for Infectious Diseases. CDC includes 11 institutes, centers and offices. Dr. Gerberding is the first woman to serve as CDC Director.*

Senate Confirms Richard Carmona as Surgeon General – *On July 23, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee overwhelmingly approved President Bush's nomination of Arizona trauma surgeon and deputy sheriff Richard Carmona to be the next surgeon general by a vote of 98-0.*

Dr. Carmona, a Vietnam veteran and SWAT team leader, most recently served as a clinical surgery professor at the University of Arizona and as chairman of the state's emergency medical system in a six-county area. He has promised to use his experience in health and law enforcement to help the nation prepare for bioterrorist threats. During Dr. Carmona's Senate hearing, he was questioned about numerous health issues, including obesity, but he offered few specifics as to how he would use the surgeon general's post to combat particular health issues.

α α α α α