

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition  
and Forestry Committee  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman, Education and Labor  
Committee  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Senator Harkin and Representative Miller:

As a nutrition education professional, I urge you to strengthen and stably fund the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Team Nutrition Network. The Team Nutrition Network is a federal program that, if adequately funded at \$70 million per year, could establish and strengthen nutrition education and promotion efforts through child nutrition programs across school districts, states, and the nation.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization provides an important opportunity to strengthen the Team Nutrition Network. Nutrition education and promotion funding would foster not only healthy eating, but also could support local school wellness policies, help implement school nutrition standards, improve commodity choices and processing, improve school food safety, leverage existing state and local networks and resources, and increase participation in national child nutrition programs in schools.

The current lack of funding for the Team Nutrition Network has resulted in fragmented or nonexistent nutrition education and promotion programs making it difficult for innovative, evidence-based approaches to be implemented in ways that are both comprehensive and sustainable. Providing consistent and reliable funding to the Team Nutrition Network would support a strong nutrition education program in every state, foster collaboration in building multidisciplinary, integrated nutrition and health promotion partnerships, allow states and districts to address their own unique nutrition education and promotion needs, and fund qualified professionals to lead these efforts.

Nutrition education is essential to addressing children's health and helping establish lifelong healthy eating patterns. From math class to the cafeteria, there are innovative ways to integrate nutrition education and promotion. Teaching children to lead healthy lives both in and out of school will serve our children and society well – not only will it support child health and their ability to learn, it will also reduce health-care costs now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_