



**banpac**

Bay Area Nutrition & Physical Activity Collaborative

## **Healthy Vending Machine Memorandum of Understanding Marin County Department of Health and Human Services**

### **Policy Overview**

In July 2004, the Public Health Department developed a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) for use with vendors who stock vending machines in the facilities of the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services. The M.O.U. includes Healthy Food Guidelines which stipulate what foods can be sold in vending machines in DHSS facilities. The guidelines of the M.O.U. follow SB 12 guidelines being implemented in schools. DHSS chose these guidelines to ensure a consistent message to vendors some of who stock school vending machines and machines in other organizations in the county in addition to the DHSS machines. The guidelines are as follows:

- Healthy beverages shall consist of water, milk, 100% fruit juice with no added sweeteners.
- Electrolyte replacement beverages shall include no more than 42 grams of added sweetener per 20 ounce serving.
- Milk products shall include 2%, 1%, nonfat, soy, rice, and other similar non-dairy product.
- Snack: no more than 35% of calories from fat; no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat; no trans fats and no more than 35% sugar by weight.

The M.O.U. also requires that:

- at least 50% of the products sold in vending machines meet the standards
- vendors price items that meet the standards at lower prices than other items.
- vendors utilize a color coding system based on the DHSS “Better for You” vending guidelines and provide signage to educate consumers about the healthy choices.
- vendors provide quarterly feedback to DHSS on pricing and sales of all items and an analysis of the most and least popular items.

### **Steps Undertaken to Get Policy Adopted**

- In September 2003, the Director of the Health and Human Services (DHHS) requested that healthy food guidelines for vending machines be developed to broaden DHSS’s promotion of healthy food beyond the nutrition guidelines for meetings and conferences.

- The Nutrition Wellness Program of DHSS began the work of developing guidelines based on SB 12 and worked with the Director of Public Health and several DHSS department heads to develop a protocol for educating both vendors and consumers about the new guidelines. One of the educational tools “Better for You” is a simple three-step color coding system. Green means “Go for it!”-product meets all the guidelines; Orange means “Caution!”- product meets only part of guidelines; and Red means “Stop!” – You may want to think about this purchase.
- From January through June 2004, after the guidelines were developed, the Nutrition Wellness Program met with the vendors to help them identify products that meet the new guidelines.
- Finally in July 2004 a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) was developed, as an expedient way to pilot the program and establish the guidelines and agreement by both parties. (see attachment M.O.U. template).

### **Lessons Learned**

- Utilizing a M.O.U. in jurisdictions without vending contracts may be an expeditious way to get a pilot program up and running.
- It is important to allow adequate time to fully inform and educate staff and the public about the new program and its benefits.
- Educating the public remains an on-going task. It is advantageous to have promotional and educational materials printed prior to implementation of the program.
- It is advantageous to include staff at each worksite in product selection and important to recruit staff to assist with the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program. Staff plays an important role in improving product selections and signage.
- It is important to develop a quality assurance process to help guarantee that vendors accurately designate products in accordance with the guidelines and keep the machines adequately stocked This is a very time-consuming process.
- Sales of healthier products increased after the program was initiated.
- Vendors can become promoters of healthier options. The vendor who now regards the program as beneficial is promoting it with other customers.
- Suppliers of snack products are providing vendors with nutrition information and more products that meet the guidelines.

### **Contact Information**

For more information contact: Linda Armstrong, MS, R.D., Marin Department of Public Health’s Nutrition Wellness Program at [larmstrong@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:larmstrong@co.marin.ca.us).

July 2006



Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer through the *California Nutrition Network*. For information about the California Food Stamp Program, please call 1-800-952-5253.