

# **Monterey County Health Department**

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Administration**

Health Department: All Divisions Date effective: July 1, 2005

Policy and Procedures: # 20-16 Date Amended:

### **Subject: Nutrition And Physical Activity Policy**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The Monterey County Health Department is working to enhance, promote and protect the health of Monterey County's individuals, families, communities and environment. One of the goals of the Health Department is to increase the number of individuals, including staff, adopting and sustaining healthy behaviors. Organizational change strategies are an effective way of promoting and sustaining healthy lifestyles. Therefore, the Health Department is committed to providing opportunities for employees to practice healthy lifestyle principles in both the community and at worksites. Health Department staff is seen as role models in the community and should be practicing healthy lifestyle principles. The Health Department wishes to ensure that staff are promoting and practicing healthy lifestyle principles at all community events and meetings where we are the recognized lead or sponsor. The Health Department will also ensure that staff are given opportunities to be physically active and eat healthy at their worksites. This policy exists to clearly identify the Health Department's standards for healthy food choices and activity in the community and at worksites. This policy applies to all Health Department sponsored and/or coordinated meetings and events. This policy does not restrict employees' individual food choice

#### **II. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The nation has seen an unprecedented rise in the level of obesity and overweight. Nationally, nearly two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight and 30.5 percent are obese – a figure that has more than doubled in the last 40 years! In Monterey County, one-third to one-half of adults are overweight and/or unfit. Since adults in the workforce spend more than 50% of their waking hours at work, a healthy workplace is an important factor in supporting healthy lifestyles. The combination of physical inactivity and unhealthy eating is now the second leading contributor to preventable death. Unhealthy eating and lack of exercise are directly linked to excess weight and an increase in many other health complications, loss of energy, productivity, depression and increased health care costs. Individual lifestyle changes can be difficult. An organization, by adopting a healthy choice only policy, can both help employees make changes, but also serves as a model to the public and other organizations in making healthy choices, the norm.

### **III. POLICY**

#### **Meetings and Events**

At all Health Department sponsored and/or coordinated meetings and events, both in the community and at worksites, for staff, community agency representatives or community members where food will be provided, the selections must be in accordance with the Department's Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy for purchasing food, and shall adhere to the following in an effort to foster healthy lifestyles.

#### **Promote healthy eating and good nutrition practices by providing:**

- A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Low fat and non fat dairy products
- Whole grain products
- Water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices, mineral water, diet sodas, tea, and coffee
- Low fat dressings and condiments

#### **The following types of food and beverages do not comply with the healthy food practices outlined above and therefore should not be provided:**

- High sugar beverages, such as soft drinks/sodas, fruit drinks with less than 100% natural juice, and sports drinks
- High fat and calorie dense foods such as donuts, pastries, cookies, candy, chips, fried foods including fried vegetables

#### **Promote physical activity by:**

- Incorporating structured stretch and movement breaks during meetings and events exceeding one hour in length

#### **Health Department Worksites**

Healthy eating and good nutrition practices outlined above for community events and meetings also apply to meetings held among Health Department staff at Health Department sites. Staff at times, may wish to provide a cake or similar dessert item for a planned employee celebration. This activity will be sanctioned if it is for employees only. Staff is encouraged to provide healthy food options as outlined above and to substitute a low fat, lower sugar option such as angel food cake served with fresh fruit for the traditional high fat, high sugar birthday cake.

**Promote healthy eating and good nutrition practices by providing:**

- Snack vending machines that contain items such as trail mix, pretzels, low-fat crackers, multi-grain bars, unsalted roasted nuts, and fresh and dried fruit.
- High fat and calorie dense foods are not allowed.
- Beverage vending machines that contain only water, 100% fruit and vegetable juice, diet sodas and low fat and non-fat milk.
- Vending machine faces that only advertise healthy products.
- Fundraising efforts focusing on the sale of food items need to comply with the meetings and events description of healthy food options outlined above. The sale of items not considered being in compliance with the healthy eating and good nutrition practices outlined above should not be provided for sale.

**Promote physical activity by:**

- Incorporating physical activity into the workday’s two-15 minute breaks and 60 minute lunch hour.
- Encouraging use of stairs; parking farthest from worksite entries; using restrooms farthest from office; getting up from chair at least every 60 minutes; throughout the work day walking to someone to respond to a call or email inquiry.

**IV. DIVISION SUPPORT**

The Community Health Division will provide reasonable consultation and or training through the Employee Wellness Program (Health Promotion Partnership) and/or Nutrition. Programs to any Division regularly hosting office or public events where food choices need to be made including reviewing food selections or menu choices and food selections for vending machines to ensure compliance with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy. Tip sheets adopted from *Meeting Well: A Tool for Planning Healthy Meetings and Events* and *Fuel Up, Lift Off LA* a physical activity video will be distributed to each Division. A one-page fact sheet with resources will be posted on Employee Bulletin Boards. Requests for consultation or training must be submitted in writing to the Employee Wellness Program (Health Promotion Partnership) for appropriate referral.

ORIGINATOR:

Director of Health

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