



Health Department

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, CHE
Commissioner of Health

Administration



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NEW EFFORT TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN MILWAUKEE

Milwaukee Health Department Seeking Support from MPS Schools to Combat Growing Epidemic

The City of Milwaukee Health Department's Community Nutrition Program is joining forces with the State Team Nutrition Program and Milwaukee Public Schools to kick-off the **Comprehensive School Nutrition Programs Initiative on Thursday, Sept 2, 2004 at the Children's Health Education Center from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** This citywide promotion is a call for all schools to sign on to work proactively to promote a healthy school nutrition environment.

By signing a pledge sheet, schools would be provided the assistance, training, and tools needed to evaluate their school nutrition practices such as school meals, nutrition education curriculum, fundraising, and sales of food items in vending machines. Schools that develop action plans and improvement goals will be eligible for funding to implement their nutrition plans. All this will be provided at no cost to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity that is plaguing our nation.

"It's extremely important to create a shift in thinking as it relates to school nutrition for the children of our community," said Bevan K. Baker, Health Commissioner. "Research indicates there is a linkage between nutrition and learning among children and schools must take a very proactive step in changing poor nutrition policies"

In a white paper released by the Milwaukee Health Department entitled *Improving The School Nutrition Environment in Milwaukee Schools*, it points out that compared to thirty years ago, the percent of overweight and obese children, ages six to 19, has almost quadrupled. The actual number of overweight and obese children, between the ages of six and seventeen, has soared to 4.7 million, which is about one in every seven children. It further states, "95% of all

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children between the ages of five and seventeen are reached by schools. Schools can play a key role in reversing the obesity trends through coordinated nutrition services that promote

policies linking comprehensive, sequential nutrition education programs, access to and marketing of child nutrition programs, a school environment that models healthy food choices, and by partnering with community organizations.”

The Team Nutrition Program is a nationally funded program awarded to the State of Wisconsin through a competitive grant proposal process. Wisconsin was awarded a new grant for the 2004 –2006 school years to promote healthy school nutrition environments. At present there are only six MPS schools out of over 200 that have signed on to be part of Team Nutrition Program. Through the Team Nutrition Program, schools may apply for grant awards of up to \$500.00 to implement their school nutrition action plans. Milwaukee Public Schools have also pledged funding to support schools in their efforts to develop a comprehensive school nutrition program.

“Although all schools are welcome to join Team Nutrition, we are targeting our initial efforts to get MPS schools signed on,” states Julie Allington, Nutrition Education Consultant, Team Nutrition, State Department of Public Instruction.

Yvonne D. Greer, Nutritionist Coordinator for the City of Milwaukee Health Department, will serve as Milwaukee Coordinator for this effort. For more information regarding the program, Greer can be reached at ygreer@milwaukee.gov or phone (414) 286-3619.

WHAT: Launch of Comprehensive School Nutrition Program

WHEN: Thursday September 2, 2004

**WHERE: Children’s Health Education Center
1533 N. River Center Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53212**

TIME: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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