

Child Nutrition Reauthorization

On June 30th, President Bush signed the child nutrition reauthorization legislation into law. Among its provisions:

School Nutrition Education - Authorizes a new school nutrition education infrastructure component creating state-level "Team Nutrition Networks." It authorizes grants to states to promote healthy eating and physical activity in schools. States receiving funding through this program are required to appoint state-level coordinators to facilitate nutrition education within and across schools within their state. The program will need to be funded annually through the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

Fruit and Vegetable Program - Provides \$9 million in mandatory funding for the Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides free fruit and vegetable snacks to students in schools. The bill enables the program to continue in the four states and one Indian reservation already participating and it provides funding for four additional states and two additional Indian reservations to participate in the program.

Milk - Requires schools to offer fluid milk in a variety of fat contents and allows them to offer lactose-free milk and soy milk if a student's parent, guardian, or physician sends a note requesting it. The milk provision is a modest improvement over the existing law that was a *de facto* requirement that schools serve whole milk. However, the AHA and its coalition partners at the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) advocated that schools be given complete flexibility to choose the type(s) of milk to serve to their students.

Competitive Foods - The sale of low-nutrition foods outside of the school meal programs was a hot topic of debate in House/Senate negotiations. Under Senator Tom Harkin's (D-IA) leadership, two key provisions were added to the final version of the legislation. One component requires each local educational agency participating in the school meal programs to develop a local school wellness policy by the summer of 2006. The local school wellness policies should include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines for all foods sold on school campus during the school day, and a plan for measuring implementation of the wellness policy. Parents, students, school food authorities, school boards, school administrators, and the public are all to be involved in developing the local school wellness policies. A second component provides \$4 million for the USDA to work with local education agencies on establishing healthy school nutrition environments, reducing childhood obesity, and preventing chronic disease related to diet.

WIC - The bill includes language similar to NANA's recommendation that the USDA Secretary review and revise the contents of the WIC food package "as frequently as determined to be necessary" to reflect current nutrition science.

Nutritional Quality of Meals - Authorizes grants to selected local educational agencies to promote healthy eating and physical activity among

students. These grants can be used for, among other activities, marketing healthful foods through salad bars and fruit bars, and otherwise encouraging the increased consumption of healthful foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. Grants may also be used for training food service professionals in developing more appealing and nutritious meals.