



**Paper for information: Government Updates on Nutrition  
Related Activities  
DH**

**Agenda Item: 10**

Please see attached paper for information.

## **DH Update on Nutrition Initiatives**

NB: Initiatives apply to England only unless otherwise stated

### **Ministerial changes**

- Dawn Primarolo was appointed the Minister of State for Public Health in July 2007 and is the ministerial lead for the Cross Government Obesity Programme and Nutrition. Dawn joins the Department of Health from HM Treasury where she was Paymaster General.

### **Obesity**

- We have been reviewing action on obesity in the light of emerging evidence and international experience and we will be publishing a new strategy in the Autumn which sets out new action on tackling obesity.

### **National Child Measurement Programme**

- The National Child Measurement Programme team held a series of workshops in July 2007 to consult with PCT and school staff on what went well in the 2006-07 programme and where improvements are still needed. Changes to the programme for 2007-08 were also discussed.
- The workshops were a success and well-received by participants. Their feedback will be used to inform further guidance for PCTs and guidance for schools for the 2007-08 academic year. This will be available in September 2007. An additional series of workshops is planned for early 2008.

### **Nutrition**

#### **Healthy Start**

- Healthy Start was extended across the UK on 27 November 2006 and Healthy Start branded vitamin supplements for women and children on the scheme have been available for PCTs to order and distribute since early 2007.
- Now that the scheme has been in place for over 6 months we can start to understand take-up and usage of vouchers (retailers have 6 months to claim reimbursement). We are working to improve the management information that is available under the scheme and there is a potential for a much richer understanding than was possible under the Welfare Food Scheme. A small qualitative study in Devon and Cornwall looked at why a few women/families eligible for the scheme did not apply but the study found no clear themes.
- We have been promoting Healthy Start vitamins to beneficiaries and we understand from anecdotal evidence that there has been an increase in people asking for vitamins. Later in the year we will be undertaking a fuller analysis of vitamin take-up.

### **Infant Feeding**

- National Breastfeeding awareness week will be held from 11-17 May 2008. Officials are in the process of planning on the development of promotional materials and PR activities.
- A review of the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) is continuing alongside the work being undertaken by Department of Health and FSA to press for further restrictions in the EU directive on the advertising of formula milk. The new draft domestic Regulations were issued for consultation on 2<sup>nd</sup> July for a period of 12 weeks. The consultation ends on 28 September. Subject to Ministers approval, Regulations will come into force on 1 January 2008.
- We are liaising with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to undertake a project to test the practical aspects of implementation, following which the Department of Health will make the final decision on adopting WHO Growth Standards.

### **Food Promotion to Children**

- The Department of Health is monitoring the impact of the new Ofcom and CAP rules on the nature and balance of food and drink advertising to children in broadcast and non-broadcast media and will publish a progress report in Autumn 2007. This will be followed by a more detailed review at the end of 2008.

### **Healthy Schools (Joint DH/DFES)**

#### **New Food and Drink Standards**

- A dedicated 'toolkit' to guide parents in the right direction has been published, which complements the 'Food in Schools' 'toolkit'. This will help parents make a start in working with their schools to change the food on offer. The primary purpose of the toolkit is to inform parents so that they are able to engage in local dialogue – talking to heads and governors – and take an active part in improving menus and developing healthy eating policies. The toolkit has now been updated and an insert has been sent out to schools. This highlights the changes that have happened to the food standards.
- A healthy eating guidance booklet is being written to help schools achieve the healthy eating criteria. This will focus on what schools can do to achieve the criteria and has a number of case studies of good practice to guide schools.

### **5 A DAY Programme**

- The "Top Tips for Top Mums" campaign was launched on 15 March. The aim of the campaign is to encourage families to think more about how they can improve their diet and increase fruit and vegetable consumption. "Top Tips for Top Mums" aims to help families overcome the barriers they face when getting their children to eat more fruit and vegetable – tackling issues such as cost, fussy eaters, limited

time / cooking skills, and a lack of structured meal occasions, by recruiting parents to share their top fruit and vegetable tips with other families. New TV and radio fillers are currently in production and should be available for screening in early November.

### **Physical Activity**

#### **Physical Activity Care Pathway**

- The Department is launching a 12 month Physical Activity Care Pathway (PACP) pilot in 8 GP practices in 5 localities across London from early October. Further areas will be recruited within London during the course of the pilot. Partners include Natural England and Sport England.
- The purpose of the PACP is to provide General Practitioners and their staff with an intervention to promote physical activity in adult patients, who are failing to meet the CMO's recommendations for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five days a week. Health professionals will work with patients to overcome barriers that stop greater activity, help set individual goals, signpost patients to local physical activity opportunities and keep track of their progress.
- Based on the General Practitioners Physical Activity Questionnaire, evidence from the NICE guidance on brief interventions in physical activity and motivational interviewing techniques, this model will be evaluated in terms of cost and feasibility with a view to adopting and mainstreaming the care pathway in GP practices throughout England. We are working with the BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health based at Loughborough University.

#### **NATIONAL SCHOOL PEDOMETER PROGRAMME**

- Dawn Primarolo has announced the 250 schools in deprived areas across the country who will be taking part in the National School Pedometer Programme 'Schools on the Move' from this month. As part of the programme, children at schools across England will be given pedometers as part of a £494,000 project to motivate inactive children to become fitter.
- Between September 2007 and March 2008, the Department of Health will distribute 45,000 pedometers to schools to encourage children to become more active and help reduce levels of obesity. Youth Sport Trust (YST) are managing the project on a day-to-day basis, and British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity & Health have developed the curriculum resources for the project.
- Most children said the pilot increased their interest in physical activity and half said they had become more active as a result. While the pilot proved particularly effective at encouraging less active children to do more exercise, it did appeal to children of all fitness levels.

- In the national programme, pedometers will be used in schools as a tool to support a wide range of curriculum topics and to increase awareness among pupils of the need to be active. Teachers will be trained in how to use the programme within the curriculum.  
The national programme announcement comes on the heels of a successful pilot pedometer scheme Schools on the Move that was trialled in 50 schools and showed encouraging increases in children's' activity levels.
- Local authorities have been targeted on the basis of free school meals and deprivation. This was based on the list of local authorities ranked by DH with further refinement by YST area staff based on the partnership's capacity to take on a new project at this stage. On average, there are 10 schools for each LEA with large LEAs (like Birmingham) with a larger allocation. YST asked the Partnership Development Managers to confirm their specific schools (based on local deprivation and where the most sedentary pupils are).
- In addition to the new 250 schools, we'll have 43 schools from the pilot areas continuing their involvement and they'll recommence the project after Easter. This will be an additional (approx.) 4,300 pupils. Their pedometers will be delivered after the Easter break.
- Middlesex University is continuing its evaluation of the initial pilot project by doing follow up research with 4 schools across the country, mostly to focus on the effect of the programme on young people's continuing participation in physical activity. That evaluation is due at the end of the summer term.

### **Evaluation dataset and methodology**

- In response to the recent NICE Guidance that highlighted the paucity of evidence for the effectiveness of physical activity interventions and the need to evaluate programmes incorporating similar interventions, an ad hoc group has been set up to:
  - produce guidance on the various approaches to evaluating physical activity interventions and
  - seek agreement on the measurement of physical activity.
- This work is being led by the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health with input from Natural England, Sport England, Big Lottery, Cycling England, the Devolved Administrations, NICE, DH and invited academics. The group has met three times.
- The last meeting on 3rd July was attended by Adrian Bauman, who presented on existing single question measures for self-reported physical activity and their limitations. A new draft, single item measure was agreed, which will be taken forward for validation, subject to resources.
- This work will be reflected at the 7th BHF National Centre Annual Conference on 28th November *Evaluation in a nutshell - turning theory into practice*.

