



Call to Action to Improve the Nutritional Well-Being of Women, Children and Families

We are calling on maternal and child health (MCH) and child nutrition programs to take action to enhance the public health nutrition services offered within their purview and ensure that population-based services are available that support the health of women, infants, children, youth and families.

The Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND) Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Nutrition Council calls upon programs serving women, children and families to enhance the public health nutrition components of their organizations and to include the services of a public health nutritionist when appropriate. **The ASTPHND MCH Nutrition Council recommends that:**

- ✓ **MCH Title V State Programs** provide a broad range of public health nutrition interventions to improve the health of women, children and families. Each state MCH program will benefit from having on staff at least one MCH public health nutritionist. This person will be responsible for assessing and assuring the status of comprehensive quality public health nutrition services at all levels of the MCH pyramid.
- ✓ **State and Federal Nutrition program personnel** work together to identify how to best promote the health of the maternal and child health population and to take action to carry out their joint plan. We further recommend that these program personnel collaborate to develop consistent and effective messages for the MCH population

around eating healthy and being active. Key nutrition and non-nutrition MCH partners can develop and use these messages to ensure greater consistency between programs and offer a united approach to promoting health.

- ✓ **Federal programs** clarify and address the role of public health nutrition when issuing rules regarding program content and staffing patterns. We also encourage programs to recognize the benefit of a life course approach that includes a strong maternal and child health component. Consider making regional public health nutrition consultation available to states.
- ✓ **Federally funded nutrition programs** identify opportunities for coordination to meet the overall maternal and child health nutrition goals at the state and federal levels. State personnel from WIC, Maternal and Child Health, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded and other similar programs are encouraged to work together to improve the health of women and children. Together they can identify shared goals; delineate gaps; outline and achieve objectives. Such an effort would

maximize resources, build on each organization's strengths and maintain individual program integrity.

- ✓ **Nonprofit organizations** working with nutrition and/or maternal and child health populations address the nutrition well-being of their constituents. These organizations could involve public health nutritionists from ASTPHND, the American Dietetic Association, the National WIC Association and other public health nutrition organizations.
- ✓ **University personnel** develop curriculum and training programs that expose students to public health and maternal and child health principles and experiences.
- ✓ **Credentialing organizations** recognize the skill sets needed for public health nutrition and include these experiences as part of training expectations for registered dietitians.

