

IMPACT

 University of Idaho
Cooperative
Extension System

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Panhandle Extension Nutrition Program (ENP) Changing Behaviors Long-term

The Situation

Progress has been made in fighting hunger with many Food and Nutrition Service Programs, like the Food Stamp Program (FSP). However, no legislation mandates teaching families how to develop healthy eating habits or wise shopping habits.

Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity accounts for 300,000 deaths per year. The economic cost of poor nutrition contributing to heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes is now \$71 billion per year. Consumption of a healthy diet during pregnancy and childhood is essential for normal growth and development. Research confirms that properly designed nutrition education programs, focusing on behavior change, can be effective at improving diets and nutrition related behaviors.

Our Response

The Idaho Extension Nutrition Program (ENP) is a University of Idaho Extension program serving 22 counties in Idaho. The Panhandle Extension Nutrition Program is administered from the University of Idaho Extension offices in Kootenai County and includes Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone Counties. It teaches limited resource individuals how to stretch their food dollars to provide healthy, low-cost meals for their families. In-home visits and group sessions are provided by Nutrition Advisors trained by Extension Educators and ENP Coordinators. Nutrition Advisors educate

clients in three major areas: nutrition, food safety, and money management. Lessons cover a variety of topics that include making healthy meals based on the Food Guide Pyramid, feeding children nutritiously, understanding food labels, preventing foodborne illness, planning menus, and stretching your food dollar.

The FY2001 Panhandle ENP budget is \$284,796 (\$142,396 federal and \$142,400 state). Federal funds support a part-time project coordinator and six Nutrition Advisors. Funding and program partners are the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, USDA Food Stamp Program, and USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

Program Outcomes

Panhandle ENP has implemented many new ideas and changes in 2000-2001 to more effectively serve its food stamp families. These changes include:

- New measurable program objectives that better define desired Panhandle ENP outcomes. These objectives were accepted statewide for 2001-2002.
- A follow-up evaluation used for the first time by an Idaho EN Program. This evaluation is mailed to all Panhandle ENP clients 3 months after graduating from the program. It is used to assess retention of skills learned, behavior changes, and knowledge gained. These results are compared to pre and post behavior survey evaluations.

- The development and filming of an ENP recruitment video in North Idaho. Starting in October 2001, this video will be played in several Health and Welfare waiting rooms in North Idaho. This video is now being used statewide.

In FY2001 Panhandle ENP enrolled 181 families in a series of small group or one-on-one lessons. Nutrition Advisors taught 1,136 lessons and distributed 11,350 educational materials.

Enrolled ENP participants complete a Behavior Checklist Survey at entrance, graduation, and three months post graduation. The following information indicates ENP is helping participants make changes toward improving their diets and nutrition related behaviors:

Food Safety Practices

- The number of graduates who cook meat, fish, poultry, and eggs to a safe temperature increased from 35% at entry to 91% at exit. The three-month follow-up evaluation showed 100% still practicing this behavior change.
- The number of graduates who wash their hands in warm soapy water before preparing food increased from 39% at entry to 91% at exit. The three-month follow-up evaluation showed 91% still practicing this behavior change.

Shopping Behavior/Food Resource Management Practices

- The number of graduates who shop with a grocery list increased from 53% at entry to 82% at exit. The three-month follow-up evaluation showed 75% still practicing this behavior change.
- The number of graduates who compare prices before buying food increased from 64% at entry to 92% at exit. The three-month follow-up evaluation showed 92% still practicing this behavior change.

Nutrition Practices

- The number of graduates who eat three or more servings of vegetables each day increased from 16% at entry to 46% at exit. The three-month

follow-up evaluation showed 58% still practicing this behavior change.

- The number of graduates who eat low fat instead of high fat foods increased from 23% at entry to 61% at exit. The three-month follow-up evaluation showed 50% still practicing this behavior change.

The Future

Panhandle ENP will continue to implement the changes made in 2000-2001 to better serve North Idaho's food stamp recipients.

For More Information

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