

Role-Modeling Healthy Eating Practices While Conducting Health Unit Business

Reviewed Date		Number	HS0111
Revised Date	November 3, 2010	Approved Date	March 5, 2008

Introduction

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) recognizes itself as a role model in promoting healthy eating in an effort to reduce the risk of diet-related chronic diseases and is committed to providing an environment that supports and promotes healthy eating.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Health Unit staff and representatives of their duties when *providing, selling or promoting* food or beverages for Health Unit purposes (i.e. when using SMDHU resources, or when on paid work time).

Legislative Authority

N/A

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

Healthy food and beverage choices are those that are emphasized in *Canada's Food Guide (2007)*. These foods are:

- Lower in fat, salt/sodium, sugar and caffeine
- Higher in fibre (e.g. whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruit).

Less healthy food and beverage choices are those that are high in fat, sugar, sodium and/or caffeine. These foods and beverages are recommended to be limited according to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (2007)*.

More detailed information regarding food and beverage choices is provided in Appendix A: Healthy Food Choices Checklist

SMDHU-Sponsored activities, programs, events, meetings and functions are those that the health unit is the lead, or the health unit hosts, funds directly or by flow-through, and/or have been organized by a health unit staff or representative on work time.

Policy

- Primarily healthy food and beverages will be offered at SMDHU-sponsored activities, programs, events, meetings, and functions (see definition).
- Only healthy food and beverages choices will be used for incentives, fundraising items or events, and in association with sponsorships agreements (refer to policy C1.070 for definition) directed at SMDHU staff, clients or visitors.
- Safe food handling practices will be followed at all times.

- Initiatives/projects, including committees, partnerships, or networks for which SMDHU is accountable regarding funding are expected to comply with this policy when food and beverages are being offered unless the project/partnership has an enhanced policy in place.

Consideration will be given to:

- Environmentally Friendly practices,
- Emphasizing Ontario-grown products, and
- Encouraging partners (not funded by the health unit) to offer healthy food & beverage choices.

Directors, managers and supervisors will orient staff to this policy and the expectations for staff conduct, including ensuring that new staff and health unit representatives complete the independent orientation module (link to powerpoint here).

Procedures

1. Staff and health unit representatives will use the resources and tools in the appendices to assist with healthy food and beverage selection.
2. Staff and health unit representatives will use safe food handling practices by following the guidelines provided in the Appendix B: *Safe Food Handling Practice Guidelines*. Staff can refer to the MOHLTC publications *Handle Food Safely* and *Food Safety Matters at Community Special Events* found on the SMDHU website under 'Food Safety' for further assistance.
3. Staff and health unit representatives will consider the suggestions for environmentally-friendly practices included in Appendix A: Healthy Food Choices Checklist.
4. Staff and health unit representatives will select Ontario-grown products whenever possible. Refer to *Foodland Ontario's "Ontario Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Availability Guide"* at www.foodland.gov.on.ca to guide in selecting seasonal and local produce.
5. Staff and health unit representatives who represent SMDHU on committees or with partnerships in which SMDHU is accountable regarding the funding will inform partners of the health unit policy.
6. Staff and health unit representatives will consider appropriate opportunities to promote and encourage partners who are not funded by the health unit to offer, use or promote primarily healthy foods and beverages.
 - a. When involved in external activities, programs, events, meetings and functions and healthy foods are not provided, a professional assessment will be made to determine how SMDHU participation might affect public relations in order to determine how to proceed. This may include discussions with managers and/or directors. Staff may refer to the Decision-Making Tool for Working with External Partners (Appendix C) for further assistance with such a decision.
 - b. Managers and/or directors will consider the following factors when considering participation in external activities, programs, events, meetings and functions that do not promote healthy eating: the type and length of the partnership, continuation of service to the client, SMDHU reputation and credibility.

7. SMDHU staff and health unit representatives participating in activities that involve a potential sponsorship will refer to the SMDHU Corporate Sponsorship Policy for further direction (FR0108).
8. Staff and health unit representatives are encouraged to use the Appendices to support them in implementation, but may request assistance from SMDHU public health dietitians by contacting them directly or initiating a Request for Service.

Related Policies

HR0102 Conflict of interest
FR0108 Corporate Sponsorship
FR0107 Health Unit Purchasing and Contracting Services
HLS C5.030 HLS Provision of Refreshments for Community Meetings
FHS D3.112 Family Health Service, Refreshments For Community Groups

Appendices

[Appendix A: Healthy Food Choices Checklist](#)
[Appendix B: Safe Food Handling Guidelines](#)
[Appendix C: Decision-making Tool for Working with External Partners](#)
[Appendix D: Questions & Answers](#)

Related Forms

N/A

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

September 2010 Policy re-numbered, previous number B3.136

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