



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591
Task Force on Childhood Obesity

Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2014

Present: Co-Chair: Representative Urban

Dr. Jean Mee, Judith Omphroy, Alecia Andrews, Lucy Nolan, Christine Parker, Marcia Maillard, Roberta Friedman

Next meeting: TBA

I. Convene Meeting

Meeting convened at 1:14pm.

II. Remarks by the Chairs

Representative Urban announced Senator Bartolomeo's absence and introduced Dr. Michelle Cloutier, Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center for a presentation on milk. Milk has been an area of controversy and confusion. Therefore, we need to have more information on milk and children.

III. Presentations

i. Milk Through The Ages – Dr. Michelle Cloutier

Dr. Cloutier opens with announcement that she is addressing the group as a pediatrician and that she will cover newborns to 12 months of age, children 1-2 years of age, 2-8 years of age. Older children and adults are not the subject of this presentation; it is recommended they receive three cups of reduced fat milk per day, beyond that they will not be addressed. Myth is that the consumption of milk will prevent osteoporosis in adulthood. This is not true. There is a balance between the amount of bone being laid down and the amount being reabsorbed. Up to age thirty more bone is being laid down than absorbed. After thirty the opposite is true and the consumption of milk does not stop this process. For newborns to 12 months of age breast milk is the best source of nutrition. Its benefits are detailed briefly in the PowerPoint. Other notes on feeding newborns are also briefly discussed. Children between the ages of 1-2 who are no longer being breast/ formula feed, may be introduced to cow's milk. Children in this age range should have whole milk, as much of it as they would like, as the fat in the milk is highly beneficial to the rapid brain growth children experience at this age. Children in the 2-8 year old age range should be limited to two cups per day of reduced fat milk (1% or 2%). The point upon which controversy arises is the delivery of this milk. Flavored milk has the same 9 essential nutrients as white milk. However, flavored milk contains added sugar. In regular white milk there is approximately 3 teaspoons of sugar. Flavored milk of the same serving size contains approximately 4 additional teaspoons of sugar, which is added for example in chocolate milk to counter the bitterness of the cocoa. This adds up to 128 additional calories per day, if a child consumes two cups of flavored milk per day instead of white. It has been appropriately noted that children in the USA lack calcium and vitamin D in their diets. It is also true that these nutrients can be consumed through

milk consumption and children will drink more flavored milk than white milk. In fact when flavored milk was removed, schools have seen a 62% decrease in milk consumption. Calcium and vitamin D can also be found in other foods. Vitamin D can even be received from the sun, by spending more time playing outside. There is no evidence that students who consume the additional calories contained in flavored milk then consume fewer calories in the rest of the meal. It is also important to note that parents are not buying flavored milk. The schools are. Eliminating flavored milk would result in the potential elimination of the "Energy Gap". The energy gap is a daily imbalance between energy (caloric) intake and energy expenditure that is leading to an excess weight gain in children over ten years. Flavored milk also contains added sodium, artificial colors, and flavors which provide no nutritional value. Dr. Clouier recommends, if flavored milk is to be removed, it should be done between school years (not during) and white milk should be served very cold because that is how it tastes best to children. Further policy recommendations are included in the PowerPoint.

Questions

- Rep Urban: If milk does not prevent osteoporosis are we supposed to take supplements or is it all about diet?
Answer: I am generally on the growth side of bones but there have been a number of studies recently regarding supplements and chronic inflammatory diseases as well as osteoporosis have been showing that supplements have no effect on these chronic conditions and that diet and exposure to sunlight are better. I encourage people to speak to their physicians to develop a plan and weight bearing exercise is the best way to build strong bones.
- Rep. Urban: In your presentation you put one and two percent together are they basically the same? Answer: Yes there is not much difference between one and two percent milk, but there is a big difference between one or two percent and whole milk.
- Roberta Friedman: Are there national surveys that show that most flavored milk is served at school or how much is served at home as you indicated? Answer: If you look at the food frequency, the nurses survey, NHIS, in some of the larger data sets you will find they address milk.
- Lucy Nolan: One of the arguments we heard about flavored milk was that the amount of sugar/ sodium doesn't matter because at least children are getting this milk, is the milk that much more important? Answer: If children are hungry or thirsty they will eat what you give them. If you provide a balanced diet over time children will consume a balanced diet, they do go through periods where they only eat this and then only eat that but overtime they balance.

ii. Student Health and Physical Education Act (SHAPE), State of Georgia- Representative Diana Urban

Rep. Urban explained that she has recently attended a NCSL conference in Atlanta, GA and was impressed by a program in Georgia. To address childhood obesity on a statewide level Georgia passed the Student Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Act in 2009. Fitness testing similar to the Presidents Fitness Test were utilized as part of a multi-facet program for school children. A variety of stakeholders came together to design, fund, and implement the program. Five components of physical fitness are assessed by specially trained physical education teachers:

- Aerobic capacity- Measured using PACER mile
- Flexibility- Measured using Sit & Reach test
- Muscular strength- Measured using Curl-ups
- Muscular endurance- Measured using Push-ups
- Body composition- Measured using Height & Weight

Aggregate reports go to the schools and the governor, individual reports go to parents with recommendations for simple ways to improve so all aspects are within the Healthy Fitness Zone. A website has been designed to give parents and children access to healthy recipes, easy exercise ideas, an app to locate fitness activities and healthy food centers, as well as recognition for schools and groups who reach various levels of success. Another component Power Up for Thirty implements low-cost or no-cost ways to bring physical activity into the classroom. Information included in the PowerPoint shows an increase in brain activity correlated with physical activity. Positive results include, unhealthy BMIs dropped 2% between 1st and 2nd year; students passing all five assessments increased 5% between 1st and 2nd year; and Georgia now has statewide baseline data for childhood fitness.

iii. Questions / Comments

Dr. Jean Mee explained parallels between the Georgia and Connecticut programs in this area. CT has required physical testing for grades 6, 8, and 10 and the data is part of CeDAR. Many of our schools do similar activities. We have no requirement for recess and requirements for Physical Education classes are loosey-goosey. We have no funding for physical education except what comes in through taxes by the municipality. There is a competitive grant program. We developed a fitness-gram plan but the economy crashed and the funding was allocated elsewhere so we developed our own fitness performance data. We do not require BMI to be reported. We need to commission a study to update our standards. We have a recognition program that was run by the completely volunteer Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness which has since been decommissioned. We have website demonstrations and resources. Training is voluntary and reports home are at the discretion of the teacher.

Rep. Urban thanked Dr. Mee and commented that this is the sort of dialog needed as we move forward.

Lucy Nolan comments that she really likes the fitness-gram. She has been uncomfortable with BMI reporting in the past but, with it as a component of fitness assessment and with suggestions of how to improve, it is better.

Dr. Mee commented that Fitness-gram is a copyrighted material that many districts use at their own cost but if the State requires Fitness-Gram they will have to pay.

Rep. Urban commented that if this will address the achievement gap it may well be worth paying or we could come up with our own.

IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity Focus Group Updates/ Discussions

None at this time

V. Other Business

Lucy Nolan notes that the Summer Feeding program has begun at 400 sites across the state. Rep. Urban thanked the presenters and adjourned.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at 2:24pm.