

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Teaching and Learning Programs and Services
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, Connecticut 06457-1543

MEMORANDUM

TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Center Sponsors

FROM: Maureen Staggenborg, Director
Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: July 26, 2004

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #18A-04 CACFP Updates:**

1. Sunflower Seed Butter
2. Prescription Drug Card Subsidies
3. CACFP Staff

1. Sunflower seed butter is a new product being offered to schools through the USDA commodity Program and may become available on the retail market. The question has been asked regarding the safety of this product for people with peanut allergies. To answer this question, USDA turned to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, who state that 90 percent of all food allergic reactions are caused by 8 types of foods known as the “big eight” -- peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, cow’s milk, soybean, fish, crustaceans, and wheat. They point out that a “second eight” category of food allergens exists, accounting for the other 10 percent of food allergic reactions. This second eight category includes seed allergens -- sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, cottonseed, and poppy.

Those people whose allergy is limited to peanuts could in many cases substitute sunflower seed butter, without the dangers of severe allergic reactions. However, no food that has the *potential* to cause an allergic reaction is 100% safe. It should be recognized that sunflower seed butter can potentially still cause an allergic reaction in a limited number of people, although there would be a lower level of risk associated with consuming it compared to consuming peanut butter. Therefore, sunflower seed butter may be considered as a relatively safe substitute for peanut butter in certain circumstances, and can meet an individual’s consumption requirements as a non-meat, high-protein peanut butter alternative.

2. Authorized by the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA), the prescription drug discount card provides Medicare beneficiaries with negotiated prices that should be lower than the regular price of prescription drugs. Additionally, from June to December 2004, Medicare is providing through the drug discount cards a \$600 subsidy (“transitional assistance”) to Medicare beneficiaries whose incomes are not more than 135 percent of the poverty line and who do not have certain other drug coverage. An additional subsidy of up to \$600 will be provided in calendar year 2005.

Section 1860D-31(g)(6) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the MMA, states that the availability of negotiated prices or transitional assistance received through the prescription drug card “shall not be treated as benefits or otherwise taken into account in determining an individual’s eligibility for, or the amount of benefits under, any other Federal program.” Therefore, in accordance with the MMA and regulations issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, any subsidy that a household receives through the prescription drug discount card program must not be treated as income in determining eligibility for free and reduced price meals under any of the Child Nutrition Programs.

3. The Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships is pleased to announce the addition of a new staff member in the Child Nutrition Unit. Celia Cordero comes to our Bureau with great enthusiasm and a background in Clinical Nutrition, Head Start and Human Services. One of her life’s priorities is to serve the under served and she hopes to continue to promote the overall well being of individuals in her work with the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Celia will be reviewing and providing technical assistance and training for both child and adult care centers and day care home sponsors. She looks forward to visiting and working with all of the CACFP sponsors.

If there are questions regarding the issues addressed in this memorandum, contact Susan Boyle at (860) 807-2074, Benedict Onye at (860) 807-2080 or Celia Cordero at (860) 807-2076.