

## Adequate and Appropriate Nutrition

The Adequate and Appropriate Nutrition priority has three sets of objectives: improving the public health nutrition infrastructure; increasing breastfeeding and healthy eating; and increasing levels of food security.

### Progress in Meeting Objectives—Specific Findings

**Breastfeeding.** From 2000 to 2004, the proportion of Wisconsin mothers who breastfed in the birth hospital stayed the same (about 68%); but the proportion who were breastfeeding when the baby was six months of age increased from 28% to 36%. Data from Wisconsin WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program) also show improvements in the proportion of infants who are breastfed. From 2000 to 2004, the proportion of WIC infants who were ever breastfed increased from 51% to 59%; the proportion breastfed at least six months increased from 22% to 25%; and the proportion breastfed at least 12 months increased from 14.6% to 16.1%. From 2000 to 2004, the proportion of Wisconsin mothers who breastfed in the birth hospital stayed about the same (67.7% vs. 68.3%); but the proportion who were breastfeeding when the baby was six months of age increased from 27.7% to 36.1%.

No breastfeeding data by race/ethnicity exists for the total Wisconsin population of mothers and infants; however, among infants in WIC, Hispanic infants had the highest percentage ever breastfed (77.5% in 2004), followed by non-Hispanic whites (60.7%), American Indians (59.6%), Asians (46.5%) and African Americans (43.6%). All of these percentages represented improvements since 2000 in the percent of infants ever breastfed.

**Healthy eating.** This objective seeks to “increase the proportion of Wisconsin’s population that makes healthy food choices to 40 percent.” The proportion of adults who ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day was nearly stable, at 22% in 2000 and 23% in 2004. The proportion of high school students who ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day was 28% in both 1999 and 2005. The proportion of high school students who ate three or more servings of dairy products per day was 46% in both 1999 and 2005.

Fruit and vegetable consumption was not markedly different by race/ethnicity. In 2002-2004 (combined years of data), 23% of all Wisconsin adults ate five or more servings a day. The proportion was 17% among Hispanics, 24% among African Americans, 21% among American Indians, 29% among Asians, and 22% among non-Hispanic whites. Among all high school students, 27% in the combined years 2001-2005 ate five or more servings a day, compared with 22% among African American students, 29% among American Indian students, 26% among Asian students, 27% among Hispanic students, and 28% among white students. Dairy consumption among high school students differed by race/ethnicity: In 2001-2005, 46% of high school students overall ate three or more dairy servings per day, compared to 23% of African American students, 40% of American Indian students, 23% of Asian students, 30% of Hispanic students, and 49% of white students.

**Food security.** This objective seeks to “increase the number and proportion of Wisconsin households that have access to adequate, safe, and appropriate foods at all times.” In the three-

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year period 1999-2001, an estimated 8.4% of Wisconsin households (179,000 households) were “food insecure” in the past 12 months, meaning they experienced limited or uncertain availability of nutritious and safe foods, or were unable to acquire foods in socially acceptable ways. In the period 2002-2004, this proportion was 9.0% (197,000 households).

About 3% of households in both time periods were “food insecure with hunger,” meaning they experienced involuntary hunger that resulted from not being able to afford enough food. The estimated percentage was 2.9% in 1999-2001 (62,000 households), and 2.8% in 2002-2004 (61,000 households).

The only available estimate of food insecurity by race in Wisconsin is for the 1996-2000 time period, when an estimated 29.7% of African American households in Wisconsin were food insecure compared to 6.7% of white households and 8.4% of all state households.

Progress was not measured for the infrastructure component of this priority’s objectives.

### **Selected Accomplishments and DHFS Activities**

- Increased participation in FoodShare (the former Food Stamps program) through outreach and other activities. In October 2005, FoodShare enabled more than 150,000 families encompassing nearly 360,000 individuals to purchase nutritious foods, freeing up household income to pay for other living expenses.
- Created a statewide workgroup of nutritionists from institutions of higher education, the first time that intern programs and dietetic programs had ever come together to create experiences for nutrition students in the field of public health. This program, “Do Public Health Nutrition,” is aimed at improving the public health nutrition workforce.
- Submitted a grant to the University of Wisconsin Partnership Fund to implement the Dietetic Opportunities in Public Health Nutrition Program.
- Received additional USDA/CDC funding to expand and improve the statewide nutrition surveillance program to improve data collection for local projects and WIC and to hire a nutrition epidemiologist.
- Created a garden toolkit called “Got Dirt?,” a step-by-step guide that encourages school, childcare, and community gardens. Held seven statewide trainings on how to start and maintain gardens to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Reconvened the Wisconsin Food Security Consortium to address food insecurity and hunger in Wisconsin.
- Received funding to develop a plan for Public Health Nutrition Preparedness that will develop policies and plans to assure access to and safety of the food supply in times of natural or manmade disasters or emergencies.
- Received (along with the Department of Public Instruction) the “Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program” from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by providing daily fresh fruit or vegetable snacks to every student in 25 selected Wisconsin schools.
- Revitalized the Wisconsin 5-a-Day Coalition to promote fruit and vegetable consumption in Wisconsin. Implemented a statewide system to distribute “5-a-Day” materials to teachers, local health departments, health care providers and local coalitions.

- Implemented a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program in selected local WIC projects to increase the number of mothers who breastfeed and the number of months their infants are breastfed.
- Assumed management responsibility and oversight of the \$13 million food stamp nutrition education program to improve coordination of food and physical activity programs for eligible people.
- Improved the competence and diversity of the public health nutrition workforce by providing current dietetic students and interns with culturally diverse experiences.
- Provided training to bilingual WIC clerks so they can provide culturally appropriate nutrition education and breastfeeding peer support to participants of their own language.
- Implemented new federal data requirements to standardize the collection of race and ethnicity data.
- Implemented efforts to diversify the ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic composition of advisory committees.

### **New and Emerging Issues**

- In January 2005, the US Dietary Guidelines replaced the general Food Guide Pyramid with “MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You.” This new approach includes physical activity recommendations and 12 dietary recommendations that can be tailored specifically to an individual. The national guidelines now emphasize the importance of eating a balanced diet consistent with caloric needs and becoming physically active on a daily basis. All USDA food packages will need to be reconstructed so food programs (WIC, School Lunch, Senior Meals) meet the new guidelines.
- Food security has now taken on a broader meaning to include the old (hunger prevention) and the new (food safety as related to natural or manmade disasters, including terrorism).