



ADVOCACY ALERT



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Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force

Health care providers weigh in on hunger

A lack of nutritious food for young children brings a host of other problems that may impact physical and mental health for life. In their earliest years, from fetal development to age three, children experience the most rapid body and brain development. Even moderate malnutrition during this period can lead to long-term health consequences including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

Identifying hunger and malnutrition at an early age means preventing a lifetime of harmful health outcomes. Health care providers are in a prime position to both identify hunger and provide intervention. A pediatrician provides much of the regular contact many young children have outside the home. When doctors are knowledgeable about the indicators and impacts of hunger, they are able to identify children who are at risk. In response, health

providers can provide families with information about food resources and education to prevent malnutrition.

During the summer of 2007, the Childhood Hunger Initiative sent surveys to more than 600 physicians and nurse practitioners working in pediatric and family practice settings in the Portland metro area. The survey assessed providers' knowledge of the health consequences for children who do not get adequate nutrition.

Nearly 200 providers responded and many were very knowledgeable about the concept of food insecurity and had some familiarity with the health consequences associated with an inadequate food supply.

When asked what contributed to household food insecurity nearly all of them acknowledged that low household incomes and scarcity of food were

significant contributing factors.

Health care providers understand that children living in food insecure households are at higher risk for behavioral problems, more frequent illness, poor cognitive development, and paradoxically, for being overweight.

The survey also revealed that providers want to be involved in the solution. In fact, 97 percent believed that hunger should be addressed in the clinical setting and most were willing to address the subject with a standardized screening question with their patients.

Members of the Childhood Hunger Initiative are using the survey results and other research to create a curriculum that will help health care providers address childhood hunger and food insecurity. This course will meet continuing medical education

take five
(actions that take five minutes or less)

Message:
The new Act to End Hunger executive summary outlines an ambitious set of action items for the coming year. Significant progress has been made on 26 of the 40 action items to date. You can help make this year the most significant by joining with others to work on one of the proposed next steps. To see go to Web site: www.oregonhunger.org.

Action:
Call or email Patti Whitney-Wise if you would like to pledge your time to one of the action items: patti@oregonhunger.org. (503) 595-5501. See story on page 2 for more information.

credit requirements and should be available later this year. For more information contact Tammy Darby at tdarby@oregonfoodbank.org or 503-282-0555, Ext. 230.

Free summer lunches for kids

Children and youth aged 1-18 years can eat free lunches from late June through mid August. The Summer Food Service Program, a federally funded nutrition program, offers lunch at locations throughout Oregon. Many also offer breakfast and snacks. This program makes sure children out and the cafeteria is closed. Summer meals are summer schools, affordable housing sites and commu-



nity centers. Many sites offer free activities in addition to meals, making the program fun for all kids.

The summer food program meets a real need in our communities. One in five Oregon children are food insecure, meaning they have limited or uncertain access to safe and nutritious food. Children who are hungry (cont. on second page)

Summer food program (cont. from front page)

or food insecure are more likely to be in poor health and less likely to form friendships, to be curious, and to learn.

To find a meal site near you, call 1-800-SAFENET (toll free) or go to www.SummerFoodOregon.org. This Web site has maps of summer lunch sites and

hours they are open. It also provides information about public transportation and contact info if you have questions or want to volunteer.

Would you like to help?

There are a number of things an individual can do: help prepare or serve meals,

assist with outreach or special events, help lead recreational activities, and more. Call Annie Kirschner at the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force 503-517-2099 for more information.



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Update on Oregon's Act to End Hunger

This is the third action summary since Governor Kulongoski and anti-hunger advocates unveiled Oregon's Act to End Hunger in 2004. This summary highlights accomplishments between April 2006 and April 2008 and sets priorities for the last year of the five-year plan. The Act to End Hunger continues to inspire Oregon's leaders in community, business and government to make a significant difference for Oregonians. Our state has gone from number one in hunger to the middle of the states during this time.

Of particular note during the past two years:

- Oregon's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program received an additional \$25.8 million dedicated to strengthening Oregon families.
- Consumer loan rates were capped at 36 percent (down from 500 - 600 percent regularly charged), protecting low-income families from dangerous debt burden.
- Oregon's successful collaboration to increase food stamp participation has resulted in a nearly \$3 million bonus allocation from the United States Department of Agriculture, dedicated to reaching more families and seniors.

The Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force has seen extraordinary success from the guidance provided by the Act to End Hunger. There has been progress on 26 of the 40 actions in the plan.

Even so, we face new challenges in the immediate future such as a dramatic and continuing increase in the costs of food, fuel and housing – while wages have not kept up.

Until all families have income adequate to meet their basic needs and put nutritious food on the table, our communities remain at risk.

We have much to celebrate – and much remains to be done. Join us in building a stronger Oregon, where all families thrive.

Go to www.oregonhunger.org to view the full summary or order a copy from Shauna Petchel at shauna@oregonhunger.org or call (503) 595-6062.



Mark Your Calendars - October 6 - 8, 2008 - *Creating Opportunities to Thrive*

... is the title of a three-day conference October 6-8 in Salem. Oregon's Housing and Community Services Department and Community Action are merging their housing and poverty conferences into one:

- October 6: HOUSING. Workshops will focus on housing issues such as minority ownership, green building, fair housing, financing, and homelessness.
- October 7: THINKING UPSTREAM. Nancy Amidei, director of the Civic Engagement Project, will help us address poverty by helping all Oregonians thrive.
- October 8: GUEST SPEAKERS. We'll hear from Donna Beagle who will give us an intensive look at poverty and Rey Ramsey from One Economy.

If you can't attend the full conference, consider joining us on October 7th to help craft a 20-point plan to help all Oregonians thrive. Join us for an engaging day and leave with a plan to move forward. To be added to an email list for full conference details, contact Sandy McDonnell: Sandy.Mcdonnell@state.or.us.