Michigan State University Extension

Health and Nutrition Institute

Nutrition and Physical Activity Workgroup

**2011 Project Fresh Evaluation**

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**2011 WIC Project Fresh Evaluation**

**1. Project Goal and Background**

**Goal:** To create awareness of the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables, therefore increasing consumption.

**Core nutrition message:**

* Eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables daily (2 ½ to 3 cups).

**Participants will be able to:**

* Discuss the benefits of eating various fruits and vegetables.
* Identify ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into their diets.

**Background:**

Many Americans do not consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Eating the recommended amounts can help reduce risk for certain cancers, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and help maintain a healthy weight. Both fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Eating a variety is very important in order to get all necessary nutrients.

**What is Project FRESH?**

* Project FRESH is an educational program providing participants with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer’s markets.
* It plays an important role in helping families eat more fruits and vegetables.
* It also benefits local farmers by bringing income to them through the redemption of the Project FRESH coupons.

**2. Progress in Achieving Goal(s)**

In order to provide a standardized nutrition education program to our participants, in Spring 2011 we revised the MSUE Project Fresh lesson plan and presentations with the ChooseMy Plate information. Additionally, we developed an evaluation tool for the program. WIC Project Fresh was offered to more than 5,000 participants throughout the state of Michigan.

In the following section we present a summary of the findings from data of the WIC 2011 Project Fresh. It is based on 5, 333 evaluation forms that were collected and totally or partially analyzed at the MSUE evaluation office. The results can give us a general idea of the socio-demographic characteristics of our participants and their perception of our program.

Note: After each percent, the total number of participants with valid data in presented in parenthesis.

* 1. *Socio-demographic characteristics*

The educational program was offered in a total of 36 counties in Michigan: Alger, Alpena, Antrim, Barry, Bay, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Clinton, Crawford, Eaton, Genesee, Gladwin, Gratiot, Ingham, Iron, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Luce, Mackinac, Mason, Menominee, Midland, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Saginaw, Sanilac, St Joseph, Tuscola, Wayne, and Wexford.

The distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the partial data analyzed was:

* Gender - 96% women (N=4,740)
* Age groups (N=4,697)
  + 8% - ≤20 years old
  + 52% - 21-30 years old
  + 30% - 31-40 years old
  + 10% - ≥41 years old
* Race (N=4,392)
  + 72% White
  + 19% Black/African American
  + 9% Others
* Ethnicity (N=3,996)
  + 85% Non-Hispanic/Latino
  + 14% Hispanic/Latino
  + 1% Do not wish to provide
  1. *EBT/SNAP participation*
* 68% (N=3,074) of the participants reported that they were receiving EBT/SNAP benefits at the time when they participated in the Project Fresh presentation.
* 67 % (N=3,057) of the participants reported that they have applied or received SNAP/Bridge Card in the last 12 months.

2.3. *Current or future visits to farmer’s markets*

* 80% (N=4,625) of the participants reported that they have been to a farmer’s market before.
* 98% (N=4,564) of the participants reported that they planned to visit the farmer’s market in the next month after the presentation.
* 98% (N=4,499) of the participants indicated that they intended to buy fruits and vegetables at the local farmer’s market. [They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I will buy fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers market”]

2.4. *Intentions of healthy behaviors as a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation*

* 93% (N=4,565) of the participants reported that they will eat more fresh vegetables a day.

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I will eat more fresh vegetables per day”]

* 94% (N= 4,560) of the participants reported that they will eat more fresh fruits per day.

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I will eat more fresh fruits per day”]

* 95% (N=4,546) of the participants reported that they plan to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to get a variety of nutrients.

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I plan to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables ‘rainbow of colors’ to get a variety of nutrients”]

* 1. *Concepts learned*
* 90% (N=4,095) of the participants learned new ways to incorporate more fruits into their meals and snacks.

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I learned new ways to incorporate more fruits into my meals and snacks”]

* 94% (N=4,523) of the participants learned new ways to incorporate more vegetables into their meals.

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “As a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation workgroup… I learned new ways to incorporate more vegetables into my meals”]

* 98% (N=4,468) of the participants was aware of the potential benefits of a healthy diet. T

[They *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement: “Eating fruits and vegetables everyday as part of a healthy diet may reduce your risk of certain types of cancer and various diseases”]

**3. Major Setbacks**

One of the challenges during this fiscal year was the evaluation process. Several measures were taken to improve the quantity of participants with evaluation data, and the quality of the data and reports. For the discussion of the findings of this data we focused on the percentages of valid cases. Valid cases were those that answered the question with one of the possible valid alternatives. It did not include cases where questions were unanswered, or cases in which we did not have the information because it was not assessed in the evaluation form that the instructor used for a particular group.

**4. Overall Assessment**

We were able to reach a significant number of participants with nutrition education. Those from whom we were able to gather outcome data demonstrated intentions to improve healthy behaviors as a result of attending the Project Fresh presentation.