

Child Nutrition Weekly Update



August 6, 2009

In this issue:

- Responding to School Closings for H1N1 Outbreaks
- Annual Conference for Child Nutrition Administrators - October 21-23, 2009
- Kindergarten Breakfast Program 2009 - 2010
- The Clock is Ticking..... Download Your Direct Certification Data
- Statewide Media Release - Annual Free/Reduced Price Eligibility

Responding to School Closings for H1N1 Outbreaks



Are you prepared to respond to school closings should an outbreak of the H1N1 virus occur in your LEA? Since the H1N1 virus has been shown to affect school-aged children disproportionately, and children are known to be highly likely to transmit flu viruses, especially in school and other group settings, **it is imperative that Child Nutrition Administrators across the state begin to develop plans for meal preparation (meal availability) should an outbreak cause school closings.** Public health experts are concerned that the novel H1N1 virus may persist into the fall, potentially as a more severe strain, causing more widespread serious and life-threatening illness which may prompt decision-makers to close school(s).

The time to begin planning for a possible outbreak is NOW. If you have not already been informed of or involved in your LEA's H1N1 Influenza Response Plan, please inquire with your Leadership to obtain a copy of the plan. It is important for you to know what your LEA expects of the Child Nutrition Program *before* a possible outbreak. Over half of all students enrolled in NC's public schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Should an outbreak cause school closings, many of these low-income students may not have access to other sources of food when school is closed.

The US Department of Agriculture has recently provided guidance concerning the role of local Child Nutrition Programs in providing meals to low-income students during school closures related to H1N1 Influenza outbreaks; the USDA Policy Memo is attached. LEA Child Nutrition Programs may continue to *prepare* meals at school for distribution to low-income students through the Summer Seamless Option (SSO) or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The requirement to serve meals in a congregate setting will be waived, however, since congregate feeding is contraindicated during a H1N1 outbreak. Otherwise, the SSO will generally operate as it does during the summer months in that all meals provided to children 18 years and under will be reimbursed at the *free* School Meal Program rates (breakfast, lunch and/or snack) (For information about preparing meals under the SFSP, please contact Cynthia Ervin, SFSP Coordinator, at cynthia.ervin@ncmail.net for assistance.)



In order to prepare meals during an H1N1 under the SSO, schools must be enrolled, in advance, in the SSO. All SSO-approved sites will be considered “Closed-Enrolled” sites. The Child Nutrition Services section is in the process of preparing a “SSO Waiver Template” that contains specific information that will be required to issue a waiver to operate in a non-congregate meal setting. The waiver will require information, for each school, including the following:

- Meal service(s) provided (breakfast, lunch and/or snack);
- Method of meal distribution (this is the responsibility of the LEA, **not** the Child Nutrition Program unless “meal delivery” allows the “pick up” of meals from the school);
- Meal counting/claiming procedure; and
- Other information pertinent to the waiver request.

The decision to prepare meals during a school closure is ultimately a local decision. We encourage you to begin discussions with your LEA leadership as quickly as possible in order to be prepared should an outbreak, resulting in school closure(s) occur in your LEA.

Additional information will be provided in each *Child Nutrition Weekly Update*. We will provide more specific instructions about enrolling schools in the SSO, completing the Waivers, Meal/Site requirements and other related issues. We will also provide a series of Questions/Answers concerning school meals and H1N1 school closures in each *Child Nutrition Weekly Update*. This topic will also be discussed in detail during each region’s Policy Update in September. We will make every effort to keep you informed as additional information becomes available.

Annual Conference for Child Nutrition Administrators - October 21-23, 2009



Mark your calendars...the Annual Conference for Child Nutrition Administrators is scheduled for October 21-23, 2009 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Research Triangle Park. An invitation to attend the conference and tentative agenda are attached.

You may make your individual hotel reservations by calling the Sheraton Imperial at 919-941-5050 or Central Reservations at 800-325-3535 and identifying yourself as a participant in the "NCDPI Child Nutrition Services Conference". You may also make your room reservations at:
<http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=0907303688&key=4DC82>

The conference hotel rate is \$109.00 plus 12.75% tax per night for single or double occupancy. **Reservations must be made prior to September 18 to receive these rates. The rates will increase significantly after September 18.**

The Conference Registration Deadline is September 25, 2009.

To register for the conference, please go to:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229GMOYEXZV>

Kindergarten Breakfast Program 2009-2010



We have had several questions pertaining to the Kindergarten Breakfast program for the coming year. As of today, we have not been notified of the status of this program for the coming year. While we have no reason to think the program will not be continued at its same (low) reimbursement rates for the coming year, however, we are not in a position to confirm this until we actually receive written confirmation from the School Business and Budget Divisions of DPI. We will notify you as soon as we receive written confirmation.

The Clock is Ticking...Download Your Direct Certification Data



This is a reminder...If you have not already done so, please download your LEA's Direct Certification File from the DCV System. You have until **midnight, Monday, August 10, 2009** to download the original file into your eligibility software. If the file is not downloaded by this time, you will continue to have access to the file, but you **will not** be able to download the file. You will be required to manually enter the data into your software if the file is not downloaded by the deadline.

An updated file (for the month of August) will be available to you for download on **August 17**. The new file will contain the names of newly enrolled students. The updated file will "over ride" the original file and will not contain historical data from the previous file; it will only contain the names (and other pertinent information) of students that did not appear on the original list of students who are directly certified for free meals. **You must download this updated file before midnight on August 28 as it will be replaced with another updated file on September 3 (for the month of September).**

Hereafter, you must download the current month's file no later than the last working day of each month. The following month's file will be available to you by the 3rd or 4th working day of each month. Please remember, while you will always be able to view prior Direct Certification data, you may only download the current month's data.



Statewide Media Release – Annual Free/Reduced Price Eligibility



The state-wide media release (see attached) announcing eligibility guidelines for school meals 2009 – 2010 was sent to all NC media outlets earlier this week. You may make modifications to this release to reflect information pertaining to your LEA should you choose to do so.

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