

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Subject: Promoting Healthy Eating

Reference: House Concurrent Resolution No. 151, HD1, SD1

Action Requested: Report on programs to offer alternate vegetarian school lunches and progress in promoting eating five or more fruits and vegetables per day.

DOE Report: See attached.

**REPORT TO THE  
TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE**

**STATE OF HAWAII**

**2002**

**PURSUANT TO  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 151, HD1, SD1,  
REQUIRING A REPORT BY THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN PROMOTING  
INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE  
IMPORTANCE OF EATING  
FIVE OR MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES PER DAY**

**PREPARED BY:**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
STATE OF HAWAII  
AUGUST 2002**

## BACKGROUND

The three leading causes of death in the nation, as well as in Hawaii, are nutrition related. These diseases are heart disease, cancer and cerebrovascular disease. Diabetes and obesity are two other serious nutrition related conditions prevalent among Hawaii's residents.

Prevention of these diseases through good nutrition and regular physical activity are critical factors to good health. Eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day is one behavior that has been shown to reduce the risk of all these diseases. Federal health agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control, National Cancer Institute and United States Department of Agriculture acknowledge the significant health benefits of eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily and provide national recommendations and standards encouraging this.

## PROGRESS IN PROMOTING 5 A DAY

### Hawaii Department of Health

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has developed numerous strategies in promoting and educating on the importance of consuming at least five fruits and vegetables a day. These strategies involved a broad range of mediums, from media campaigns to community fairs and focus on system, environmental or policy changes. Listed below are some strategies either implemented or currently under development. **Start.Living.Healthy.** (SLH) is a media campaign launched by the DOH in January 2002. This campaign focuses specifically on three key areas: good nutrition, regular physical activity and tobacco cessation. The slogan of SLH is “You gotta start somewhere”, in which small lifestyle changes count in promoting good health. Encouraging people to eat “5 a day” is one of major messages of the nutrition component of the SLH campaign. The method and type of 5 a day education disseminated through SLH is dependent on the activity or event it is involved in. Examples include:

- **Women's Health Month** – advertisements were developed that promoted important nutrients for women's health – folic acid and calcium – by eating fruits and vegetables that contain these nutrients, among other foods.
- **Hawaii State Farm Fair 2002** – a SLH booth at the fair disseminated free Nalo Green salads and literature on the benefits of fruits and vegetables
- **Corporate Challenge** – competing teams involved in this challenge were encouraged to eat and keep track of their fruit and vegetable consumption; points were given to those who meet the minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- **School chef demonstrations** – students in elementary school are treated to presentation and demonstration by a well-known Hawaii chef, such as Alan Wong, and food sampling; children are educated on the benefits of using fresh produce to high fat, high salt food products; local produce were used in the demonstrations

**Hawaii 5 A Day Coalition.** In the early 1990's, the DOH had established a Hawaii 5 a day coalition. This coalition is made up of individuals representing various agencies and companies, such as HPC Foods, Vegetarian Society of Hawaii, and Department of Education. In the past, the coalition had focused on 5 a day educational activities during 5 A Day Month – September, mainly O'ahu based. This year, the coalition will be developing a statewide strategic plan with input and discussion from all partners involved. During August 2002, the coalition identified focus areas and writing of the plan is scheduled to begin in September 2002. Focus areas include:

- DOE cafeteria managers training – this involves developing a training series for cafeteria managers, which educates on the importance of good nutrition, including 5 a day, and food preparation of healthy, local dishes that can be integrated in the school menus.
- School gardens – the coalition will develop a educational lesson on 5 a day for schools who already have school gardens.

**Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalitions.** Nutrition, physical activity and tobacco coalitions, sponsored by DOH, have existed on the islands of Hawaii, Maui and Kauai for several years. This year, DOH will be training and working with the coalitions to conduct a nutrition and physical activity needs assessment of their communities, based on data. The needs assessment, coupled with available community health data, that each community develops will be used as a basis for work plans. In regards to nutrition, various activities and methods implemented to promote 5 a day will vary depending on the issues and barriers to adequate fruit and vegetable consumption. A few examples of issues and barriers include:

- Lack of public transportation on the neighbor islands
- Lack of knowledge and education on 5 a day (previous 5 a day educational activities were O'ahu based)
- Access to fruits and vegetables, particularly fresh ones, among islands such as Molokai and Lanai

**Food: Just Grow It!.** DOH had contracted with University of Hawaii to develop an agricultural project that targets high school students. This project involved development of a curriculum and website. It promotes optimal personal and consumer health, mental and emotional health, healthy nutrition and physical activity, and concern for the environment through agriculture-related activities. Health and wellness through physical activity is incorporated through the program through the physical labor involved in gardening. The project offers training to school teams, learning gardens on each island, and resources and technical support in organic/sustainable agriculture, nutrition, food safety, horticulture therapy and service learning.

### **Hawaii Department of Agriculture**

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (DOA) is a major player in the promotion of fruits and vegetables, particularly those cultivated from local farmers. This year, DOA has promoted 5 a day products through various community events. These include:

- Lodging, Hospitality, and Foodservice Expo – on July 10-11, 2002 at the Neal Blaisdell Center; this expo targeted the trade only.
- Hawaii State Farm Fair 2002 – on July 19-21, 26-28, and August 1-4, 2002 at Aloha Stadium. This event attracted 95,000 people.

- Made in Hawaii Festival – on August 16-18, 2002 at Neal Blaisdell Center. This event drew a record 35,500 people.

DOA also uses web and data bases as an educational tool on fruits and vegetables. The DOA's Hawaii Agriculture Product database is a database that consist of over 844 firms and is available to everyone who is searching for Hawaii agricultural products. A listing of Hawaii Farmer's Markets is updated by DOA and is available at [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets).

In addition to community events and data bases, DOA works closely with retail grocers and farmers on the Island Fresh promotion of locally grown products.

### **Hawaii Department of Education**

This year, the Department of Education (DOE) has promoted fruits and vegetables by developing a two-week alternate vegetarian menu for public schools. The meals are ovolactovegetarian – they contain eggs and milk but no meat products. This vegetarian menu can either be used as an alternate to school lunch or used as the primary lunch for schools. It is up to each individual school of whether they want to use the vegetarian menus or not. Examples of menu items developed include vegetable salads and salad bars (that contain fresh vegetables and beans). Besides making 5 a day more easily attainable for students, it provides a well-balanced, nutritious lunch for those who follow a vegetarian lifestyle.

### **SUMMARY**

The DOH, DOA and DOE all recognize the importance of eating 5 a day and are working towards improving fruit and vegetable consumption in Hawaii. Various strategies implemented have collectively reached a wide audience – schools, work places, farms and communities. It is anticipated that future strategies that promote and educate on 5 a day will reach an even broader audience, and hopefully provide them with additional skills and knowledge to enable them to make positive lifestyle changes. Given the important role that adequate fruit and vegetable consumption plays in chronic disease prevention, promotion and education on 5 a day continues to be a priority.