NOTICE

Date: August 29, 2007
Reference: # SMP 2007-6
To: Special Milk Program (SMP) Contractors
Subject: Operation of Child Nutrition Programs During a Pandemic

Purpose

This Notice provides some general guidance regarding the use of the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP) resources during a pandemic.

The Child Nutrition Programs are designed to support institutional feeding operations. The regulations require that programs will operate in a congregate setting, whether in schools or child care facilities. During the outbreak of a pandemic disease, public health officials anticipate the need for “social distancing” as a means of minimizing the spread of illness by limiting person-to-person contact. Thus, when social distancing measures are in effect, schools and other facilities may be closed, and operation of the Child Nutrition Programs will probably not be possible.

School facilities and equipment normally used in the operation of the NSLP/SBP may be used for other activities during a pandemic outbreak. In addition, in a Presidentially-declared disaster, Program commodities and other foods would be available for distribution to community groups or public agencies. However, although school facilities or commodities could be used, their use would not be related to the NSLP/SBP.

Depending on the nature and scope of the outbreak, some program requirements may be waived in areas adjacent to, but not directly affected by, a pandemic outbreak. Provisions related to operational procedures, review requirements, or meal patterns have been waived, either on a short-term or a longer-term basis, in previous disasters. The usefulness and applicability of such waivers during a pandemic would, of course, be dependent on the scope of the outbreak and the limitations of person-to-person contact in any given area.

Further information, policies and/or procedures will be provided if needed as they are received.

Contact

If you have any questions please contact your Area Program Office.