

**TRI COUNTY MENU LABELING MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2011
MENASHA GOODWILL BUILDING**

Present today: Evan Groth, Americorps; Steve Davis, Ardy & Ed's + WRABF, Denise Krueger, OHSD; Emily Dieringer, WCHD/re:TH!NK; Julia Salomon, Affinity; Jen Van Den Elzen, Outagamie PH; Wendy Vanden Zanden, Community Action for Healthy Living; Sandy Panzer, ThedaCare; Brenda Leigh, ThedaCare; Vicki Schorse, Affinity. Also joining us by phone from the State DHS: Amy Meinen and Amy Alvig.

Welcome, Introductions around the table

Review – Denise Krueger

CHIP (Community Health Improvement Plan) to NOD (Nutrition, Obesity and Diabetes committee) to Menu Labeling committee. The purpose of this group is to identify a way to label healthy choices on local restaurant menus.

Steve Davis, local restaurant owner and member of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association (WRABF), addressed the group with concerns. Realizes there is a health problem and has seen efforts that move in the direction of labeling healthy choices.

- Need to find a balance of what is good for people and keep it cost effective.
- Community stakeholders to help with costs – tailored to smaller restaurants.
- Still in the idea stage. Glad to have restaurant input today.
- Health conscious population is looking for healthy choices in restaurants
- Efforts at labeling may build demand
- Recipes could be analyzed by ThedaCare.
- Need appealing recipes – have added more healthy items through the years.
- Fries won't go away, but the demand for healthier foods is there. No need to change the whole menu. Just need to ID the healthy choices.

The State DHS reps reported the Wisconsin Restaurant Association has concerns that labeling with colors of green, yellow or red is too scary. Discussion followed:

- Develop a different logo – do not use red, yellow, green
- OK to offer healthy substitutes for unhealthy ones (e.g. broccoli for fries)
- ThedaCare developed their program with dietitians. Changed their cafeteria offerings to 60% green. Most foods are made with fresh, whole ingredients. Costs actually went down and people got measurably healthier.
- Goal is to have 5 restaurants in each community serve healthy choices.
- It is the right thing to do and could also be good for business.
- Should be voluntary. Small business may think it is too costly and “menu labeling” sounds negative and mandatory.
- Having a chef would make a difference. It may be a challenge to change restaurant stock. (it's hard to find a chicken breast that is only 3 oz)
- Petite sizes, substitute choices. There is a trend in this direction.
- Give the restaurant owners education on the scientific facts.

From the State: There is currently a state-wide effort for food labeling addressing issues of signage, pricing, variety and education. DHS:

- Has surveyed the WRA who is concerned about inconsistency and the development of separate programs.
- Is exploring the Colorado “Smart Meal Program” model to maybe be used in WI.

Jen: We have people on board in our tri-county area. Is it worth waiting for the State? There are things that can be done while waiting:

- Offer healthy choice substitutes
- Offer smaller portion size
- Steve has worked with Susan Quam from the State. He will forward information regarding the State’s efforts including the study and the power point presentation.
- Susan Quam could come to speak to our group or our group could speak with her through DHS.
- If menu labeling from the State is coming, should we be changing our direction to education?
- Is the cost of analysis too much?
- Good to be consistent, but start on education campaign and other strategies now.

Action Steps:

- State and WRA will be meeting for a presentation of the Colorado model. Amy will ask to invite members from this group. Consistency is good.
- Steve or Amy M will forward e-mail information regarding Food Environment Research to Emily to disperse to the Tri-county Menu Labeling Committee to review.
- Emily will talk to Amy about links to data.
- Steve will invite the Menu Committee to attend the Big 4 Board Meeting in February. The Board includes diverse restaurants (FVTC & Larry London, Chef at Theda should be part of the presentation).
- Emily to send Steve a sketch of what we are about. Plan on a half-hour presentation to the Board.

Summary:

- Need for consistency, don’t duplicate, and don’t have it required by law.
- Find a way to create demand, need norm change, marketing
- Make it easy for restaurant and consumer, the State would help work with us regarding restaurant supply.
- There are groups already looking for healthy alternatives in restaurants.
- Theda would help analyze recipes, recipes may be the key.
- Teach people to eat healthy, teach cooks to cook healthy.
- Show the State our efforts. Start small with a “pilot within a pilot”.
- Expand our efforts to include other restaurant setting strategies.
- Next meeting. _____

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Baeten, Secretary
Winnebago County Health Dept