

Special Diets Updates

The 2017-2018 school year is in full swing! With a new school year comes updates on special diets in the School Meals Program. Nutrition Services strongly encourages School Food Authorities (SFA) to read through the USDA's "Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs – Guidance for School Food Service Professionals" as there are significant changes from previous years.

With the new guidance manual there is an emphasis on SFAs notifying families of the process for requesting meal modifications and specifying who the responsible individual at the school is for receiving this information. With an expanded definition of disability, it is expected that most requests from a parent or guardian be accommodated as long as the need is based on a mental or physical impairment. The expanded definition also indicates that an impairment no longer needs to be "life-threatening" in order to make accommodations.

To assist SFAs, Nutrition Services has updated our special diet forms to meet the new requirements; the "Request for Meal Accommodation" form and the "Medical Statement" form. These forms are available for SFAs on NDE's Nutrition Services webpage: <https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/forms-resources/national-school-lunch-program/special-diets/>

Form #1: The "Request for Meal Accommodation" is completed by a parent or guardian when requesting modifications within the Program meal pattern. A reasonable meal accommodation is to be determined by the SFA. On this form, a parent or guardian will need to include the student's information, requested diet modification, and a description of the student's physical or mental impairment. A medical diagnosis is not required to be listed. By

federal regulation, this form is not required if accommodations can be met within Program meal pattern. However, there must be some form of documentation regarding a special diet request. Nutrition Services strongly encourages utilizing this form as a communication tool between parents or guardians, the student, and the SFA.

Form #2: The "Medical Statement" is to be used if meal accommodations cannot be made within the Program meal pattern. The medical statement requires the student's information, a signature from a licensed medical professional, a description of the student's physical or mental impairment, and a list of foods to be omitted, substituted, or modified. A medical diagnosis is not required to be listed. With a medical statement on file, an SFA can be reimbursed for meal modifications that are outside of the Program meal pattern.

An SFA should not delay a meal modification if a medical statement is not yet on file. Modifications should be made as soon as possible in order to keep the student safe and healthy. The SFA should continue to follow-up with parents or guardians until a medical statement is provided. Documentation should be kept on file when parents or guardians are contacted.

Please contact NDE's Nutrition Services at 402-471-2488 for additional questions.

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Nutrition Services Program Specialist

In reference to the USDA's "Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs – Guidance for School Food Service Professionals."

Membership/ Certification Chair Report

As of the end of September 2017 SNA has 57,671 members this is down 688 from last year. Certified members nationally is 18,826 down 879. Credentialed members is 1543, 6 more than May 2017.

Nebraska had 398 members in September 2017, down 20 from that time last year. Nebraska has as of September 2017, 101 Certified members down one from the prior month. For the same time periods we have 7 Credentialed members with an increase of 3.

Overall this is still some of the best numbers for SNA in the last 10 years. SNA President Lynn Harvey is promoting a "Membership Champion" Program. With this program SNA is hoping to raise membership numbers to 60,000 in December 2018. Nebraska's goal is to hit 422, this is a 3% increase. The 3% increase is based off of the membership as of May 2017, at that time we had 410.

Membership profile (highlights) as of September 2017 consists of the following information:

School Nutrition Employs	28,737	SDM 17,750	Certified 9,805
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This group makes up 50% of all members.

School Nutrition Managers	19,029	SDM 10,885	Certified 6,060
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This group make up 33% of all members.

District Directors	5,874	SDM 1,494	Certified 1,514
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This group makes up 10% of all memberships.

Nebraska is currently ranked 11th in growth with state membership from 1 to 600 Division, this is for actual members. We are currently 8th in % growth. *Information interpreted from September 2017 Membership, Certification & Credentialing Program Report from SNA*

This is a wonderful time to get all of our fellow School Nutrition Professionals involved in NSNA. With the "Membership Champion's", Star Club and Certification Program we owe it to our profession and students to inform and involve everyone we can!

Please contact me for any information/ help in regards to membership, Star Club, Certification, and Credentialing.

Denise Bone

Membership/ Certification Chair

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