

## SNAPping into Action: State Nutrition Action Plans at Work

### SNAP Overview: Process, Challenges, and Opportunities

**Session 1 Moderator and Speaker: Judy F. Wilson, MSPH, RD, Director, Nutrition Services Staff, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, VA**

**Session 2 Moderator and Speaker: Brenda S. Lisi, MS, MA, RD, Confidential Assistant to the Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC**

**Session 3 Moderator and Speaker: Patricia Daniels, MS, RD, Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, VA**

Our objective for this session is for all of us to be able to communicate the Federal vision and goals for collaboration. We also want all of you to be able to apply the strategies and approaches that other States will be sharing with us and to utilize the SNAP process to link and increase the reach of nutrition education. This session is all about working together because, together, we can accomplish much more than any one of us working alone.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) programs reach people across the generations and we serve one in five Americans at some point during each year. Thus, we have an excellent opportunity to reach children and low-income people.

The focus of nutrition education in the FNS programs is on health promotion and primary prevention in order to help people achieve longer and healthier lives. However, changing behavior is very complicated and challenging work because these behaviors are very ingrained. Working with partners facilitates the process of making behavior change happen.

While each FNS program has its own discreet population, eligibility requirements, and benefits, they all share a common goal: to improve nutrition for children and low income people. This goal is the common thread that runs through all of our programs. To make it strong and most useful, it needs to be interconnected with other threads. Likewise, when FNS programs at the State, Federal, and local levels work together in a collaborative and interconnected way, we too are stronger and more likely to achieve our goals.

The overarching strategy for achieving this goal is to promote the use of integrated cross-program approaches and comprehensive interventions. So, why do we want to use integrated and cross-program approaches? First, this approach recognizes that FNS programs are not all created or funded equally. The various nutrition assistance programs have various mandates and funding levels. Our ability to implement comprehensive,

behavior-focused interventions is enhanced by coordination. Further, we hope that cross-program approaches will create synergy, help maximize resources, and expand the reach of our efforts.

Our programs serve families that are often served by multiple programs. When we collaborate and connect our efforts, the messages to families resonate better and are reinforced in multiple settings. Also, coordination and collaboration help families to connect with both the food and educational benefits of our programs.

So, what has FNS accomplished? While there is still a lot to be done, we have made some progress. FNS has:

- ◆ reframed its programs as nutrition assistance programs,
- ◆ consolidated its nutrition goals and objectives,
- ◆ reorganized nutrition services to make nutrition personnel a part of each FNS program,
- ◆ designated a lead agency for nutrition policy, which is the Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation,
- ◆ encouraged the use of behavioral strategies,
- ◆ reemphasized collaborations and partnerships across its programs in FNS guidance and policy documents,
- ◆ established an annual priority planning process,
- ◆ convened this conference, and
- ◆ implemented the SNAP process.

This conference, like the first one in 2003, focuses on establishing connections—connections between people, between programs, with science, and with the community. In 2003, our goal was to get States started on this path. This year, our goal is to take it to the next level. That means that no matter where you are now, the goal is to take collaboration to the next level or higher level.

So, what is SNAP? SNAP is a process for putting cross-program collaboration into effect. It brings key program staff together to determine what they can do collectively and how they can best work together to achieve their common goals. Many States have already established and even institutionalized collaboration that involves not just external groups, but also have made FNS program operators a key part of the collaboration process. We commend you for this work, but also believe that there is value in collaboration among and between the FNS programs and with groups who have our shared goal and work with our target population.

We all understand that effective collaboration is hard and that additional resources do help to get it going and to keep it strong. We at FNS will continue to work on this aspect. The SNAP process facilitates collaboration by advocating for joint planning, including assessment and identifying key behaviors and priorities. It also uses collaboration to deliver consistent messages and encourage replication and modification, rather than duplication of efforts.

While we acknowledge that more needs to be done to support State efforts, we have made some progress. We have established the FNS Nutrition Link web page, which is a portal site that helps you to navigate through the large FNS web site to get what you want.

We have established an ongoing communication mechanism with the FNS Regional Offices. We are using quarterly conference calls to enhance communication and address ongoing issues and share success. We have established the website for SNAP which is: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/SNAP/SNAP.htm>. We have communicated with Chief State Officers to inform them and solicit their support.

Follow up is a critical part of the process for moving ahead together. We all have an important role to play. We encourage you to:

- ◆ continue to build on achievements and work to take SNAP to the next level,
- ◆ share accomplishments,
- ◆ update or initiate SNAP if you haven't started it,
- ◆ incorporate the objectives and tactics under SNAP into your State plan for WIC, for food stamps and, a Team Nutrition Grant, if you are writing one. That is how you get the funding, if needed, for these efforts.
- ◆ invite other FNS programs to the table who aren't already there,
- ◆ examine ways to provide support to the SNAP team. FNS will continue to accept responsibility for some of that, but invite you to also work to achieve this,
- ◆ explore ways to reduce barriers and to address what we have learned from you through the surveys,

We need to maintain momentum. In order to support this last task, Mr. Bost has asked the FNS Regional Offices to conduct cross-program regional meetings over the next couple of years.

The task before us is very challenging, but all of you are up to it. Changing behavior is complex because many factors play a role in what we eat and what we do. It is clear, however, that no one program or agency can do all that needs to be done to get where we need to go. Getting results will require a coordinated and deliberative approach.

We believe that connecting the nutrition education provided by the various FNS programs and focusing our joint efforts on a few key behaviors are vital steps for increasing the intensity, reach, continuity, and, ultimately, the effectiveness of our combined efforts. In short, we believe that connecting our interventions will help us better reach and link with the children and low income people that we are charged with serving.

## SNAP Session 1:

### Teamwork in Action: A Regional Perspective

**Barbara Martin, SNAP Coordinator, Chief of School Programs and Nutrition Education, Special Nutrition Programs, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robbinsville, NJ**

The Mid-Atlantic region has many agencies which need to be players in SNAP, and many of you are those. Prior to the first national nutrition education conference, many of you were doing nutrition education activities already, but most of you weren't doing them together with another organization. You were doing a child nutrition activity, or a WIC activity, or a Food Stamp Nutrition Education activity.

The SNAP process began at the last nutrition education conference in February of 2003. We all sat down around a table, had some suggested goals, and everybody picked a goal. But, choosing the goal was the easy part. What we tried to do as a group in each of the States was to select a broad goal which would accommodate some of the activities that you were already doing. Five States chose educating on the *Dietary Guidelines*. Three States chose to work on getting a collaborative group together. The last State chose to promote fruit and vegetable consumption; that State now has a Fruit and Vegetable Pilot program. So, that has helped this whole process.

After the conference, everybody went back to real life. All of those priorities that you were working on before you left were still waiting on your desk, and probably a few more. So all of the wonderful plans you had when you left the conference were pushed to the back burner because of other things that were happening.

States continued to work on the project they were already working on as part of FSNEP, WIC, Team Nutrition, and Action for Healthy Kids. But really, except maybe for the Action for Healthy Kids, there wasn't as much in the way of collaboration as there could have been.

So about December of 2003, we set up conference calls with all of the States and got all of the stakeholders, all of the people, and all of the directors from all of the organizations together on a call by State. One of the problems with the original part of SNAP was that many of the decision-makers were not at the table at the first meeting, so they didn't have that much investment in it.

People came back from the initial meeting and said, well, we chose this goal, and they said that is a nice goal and went along doing the kinds of things that they were already doing. So what we did with this call was try to explain the concept of SNAP, take people through the goals that participants chose to give them an opportunity to say, yes, I like that goal or, no, I don't like that goal.

As it turned out, everybody kept the goals, but we gave people the opportunity to feel like they were making that decision now. We also tried to make a designation of the State contact, and that was hard in some ways because everybody is so busy and looked at this as another job. Part of the process was to explain what is in it for you and what you can get out of this collaboration. Granted, it is going to take you a little extra time to sit down as part of the meeting, but what can you gain by this? How can working together spread the message a little bit better? How can you gain some resources from another agency or share with them?

Internally, our process was to have a SNAP coordinator and a SNAP team. At the very beginning, we started having meetings once every 2 weeks; after that we have probably gone every 2 months.

We assigned one person to each State. My State happens to be West Virginia. The job of the State person is to keep in touch with his team, keep up-to-date on what is happening, be a part of the conference calls or the meetings that are taking place so that we keep up-to-date on what is happening, provide status reports to the coordinator--because I have to provide status reports to many other people--and also, to facilitate the process. Sometimes, if you have an outside person look at the whole process, you can make a suggestion that helps to move the process along.

So, where are we right now? All of our States have representation from all of the nutrition assistance programs. There are levels of participation. In some cases, they are right there at the table. In other cases, they are helping out by distributing materials and that sort of thing.

All of our States have State plans, have completed all of the activities that they were going to do in 2004, and most of them have completed the activities for 2005. I think that is great! Some people have had some stellar activities and some of them are not just in nutrition assistance. As it turns out, when you sit around the table with everybody, you start talking about access and about faith-based initiatives. You can do a lot more just by being together.

What are SNAP teams all about? SNAP teams are like any other team. If you lose people, you have to start all over again. You keep going through the forming, the storming, and the performing processes. It is hard work, and it is something that you really have to keep up with. State priorities change. You have changes in staff, increased activities, or increased pressures on staff due to changes in legislation.

Those of you who have just been through the whole process of Reauthorization in child nutrition know what that is all about. There are so many new activities. I am sure that is going to be happening when the farm bill passes as well.

To be successful what we need to do is to keep focusing on what is in it for the kids; what is in it for the families; and how can we work together to be the most effective programs that

we can possibly be, because our programs are so important to so many people. We all serve the same families, as Alberta Frost said, and that is absolutely true. So keep up the good work!

## Simple But Successful Strategies Through SNAP

**Angie Abbott, MA, RD, CD, Director, Indiana Family Nutrition Program, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN**

I want to talk to you about my experiences with SNAP which is probably like what a lot of you have experienced who were at the conference 2 years ago. Beth Foland, from the Indiana Department of Education, and I went to that conference and we both sat down at the table. We knew each other, we knew what each other was doing, we both were very active at the time in Action for Healthy Kids, and we had just put a team together for Action for Healthy Kids.

As Beth and I were sitting there talking about putting that team together, we said, “this is what we are already doing and we just need to choose a goal and think about how we are going to do it.” Neither one of us wanted to do redo what was already done. Beth is active in Team Nutrition and a Fruit and Vegetable Pilot, and we, with Purdue Cooperative Extension, were active in the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. So, Beth and I sat down and said, “What can we do?”

We had some others on our team, but there has been turnover in staff so those people have fallen off. As we have worked toward new plans, we have brought on new staff people and organizations that are going to be involved. But, she and I said, “What can we do that will benefit both of our organizations and continue on the goals that both of us already had in the programs that we were working for?”

Beth and I are the kind of people who wanted to find common ground. We didn’t want to duplicate any efforts that other people were already doing, and we wanted to build on the partnerships that we already had together with Action for Healthy Kids. We didn’t want to reinvent the wheel. If there were already resources available, let’s use those instead of coming up with all new materials to use. Those were our simple strategies as we worked through Indiana’s SNAP plan.

First of all, as we talked about our common ground, obviously the Department of Education already had a great link and a great relationship with the school systems. We, in Cooperative Extension, already had a great link with the community agencies. So, we looked at those two things and what our links and strengths were for both of us, and asked ourselves, “What do we both have in common? Who do we both work with all the time that we could form a plan around?”

Beth and I decided that parents and role models fit into what we both do—communities and schools. The goal that we chose for Indiana SNAP was to educate parents, teachers, coaches, staff, and other adults in the community about the importance they hold as role models for children and teach them how to be good models for healthy eating and regular physical activity. This fit into our target audience for Food Stamp Nutrition Education and with her target audience with school programs.

Then, we talked about building partnerships. As we both looked at who we worked with, we decided that we needed some other people or partners to help us get our message across. We decided that the PTA organizations in Indiana would be great partners. They really are the leaders in the schools when it comes to the parents and the role models, and they are parents themselves, the movers and shakers in the school system and the community.

In Indiana, PTA's mission is to support and speak on behalf of children and youth and schools in the community and before government agencies. One of their visions and missions is around the health of children, so it was a perfect fit. We found that working with the Indiana PTA would be a successful collaboration in that they too were looking for ways to work with other agencies, the way Beth and I were already doing.

When we talked about what our objective would be for our SNAP goal, we decided that we wanted to get information out to the PTAs and Family Nutrition Program participants (the Indiana Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is called the Family Nutrition Program).

We wanted to get the information out to the Food Stamp participants. We also wanted to get it to all of the PTA units about what an important role parents play as role models when it comes to modeling their children's eating behaviors and physical activity. We decided that our tactics should be, first of all, to locate information on parents as role models that we thought would work for both organizations, the PTA and the Family Nutrition Program, and then to come up with a packet that we would distribute to both of those organizations.

The Indiana State PTA has a State conference where they bring together the leaders of PTA units and councils across the State. We thought it would be nice to have a speaker at that State meeting talk about the importance of role modeling when it comes to healthy eating and physical activity. We wanted to distribute those packets and disseminate the information.

We looked at many available resources. But, we didn't have to look any further than the *Nibbles for Health* parent newsletters. We saw many of them that fit right into what we were talking about. They involved the parent and the child together, the importance of parents being good role models, including doing things together like cooking together and being an active family together. We decided to use materials that were already developed because they were good materials and we did not have time to develop new materials.

We made copies of the newsletters that we thought were relevant to our goals and objectives, and put together packets of those materials. Beth Foland spoke at the PTA State meeting. She talked to the leaders of that organization about the importance of nutrition and physical activity and of being role models, and how you could integrate that into your school system and existing or upcoming PTA activities. Then, we distributed the information to the PTA units and the FNP staff to distribute to the food stamp families.

As we look back at how things went, we asked for feedback. But, when you ask for feedback, unless you constantly prod and get the same person that actually received the packet, it is hard to get feedback. So, we did not have any formal evaluation. We did some informal evaluation. We heard comments from them and had some e-mail comments come back in. We know that was something we needed to improve next time as we started up with a new goal.

As all of you know who have worked on teams or committees before, you are always looking for more team and committee members to help do the work and, more than that, to help us get out the message about what we are doing. As we looked back, those were the things that we wished we had done differently.

As we look ahead at our 2006 SNAP plan, we have looked for some new partners. This year, we are going to partner with the EFNEP through Purdue University Cooperative Extension and with the Foods and Nutrition Department at Purdue. Purdue has a continuing education lecturer by the name of Barb Mayfield. Some of you may know her as the singing dietitian. She also owns "Noteworthy Creations," which develops nutrition education materials for WIC and for kids in general.

We decided to partner with her because one of the things she has jumped into over the last couple of years is the importance of family meal time. When we looked at what we would focus on for our goal, we wanted to build on role modeling and thought the perfect way to build on role modeling is to talk about the importance of sitting down and having a family meal. We decided to focus on increased fruit and vegetable consumption as a part of the family meal.

As we are looking at next year, Beth and I have already had some conversations about how we could better collect evaluation data and get some more feedback, so that we assure that we are spending the time and resources effectively. And, that is all I have. Thank you.

## Shaping Up SNAP in Kansas

**Karen Fitzgerald, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Network Coordinator, Kansas State University Extension, Wichita, KS**

We first met in February 2003, but we had been meeting in our State before that. These three agencies had been meeting together for several years before then because all of them are part of the Kansas Nutrition Network (KNN):

- ◆ Kansas Department of Health and Environment, WIC Program
- ◆ Kansas Department of Education, Child Nutrition and Wellness
- ◆ Extension, including the Family Nutrition Program and the Kansas Nutrition Network

Since we had already convened regular meetings, it was decided that KNN would be the lead agency for our SNAP program.

If you are not familiar with Body Walk, you can go to [www.bodywalk.org](http://www.bodywalk.org). It is a wonderful event for elementary school students. They walk through the brain, mouth, and stomach. They walk through the body parts, and have little nutrition education events at each one of those stages. Power Panther is a very active part of Body Walk. He is there about 22 times in the different stations. The Kansas Department of Education coordinates Body Walk through the State's school system and brings Body Walk out to the schools. The local community gets volunteers to staff it. It is a wonderful program for young children.

We decided that for our SNAP, we would use Body Walk as the unifying theme or event. Because KNN is funded through FSNE, we chose a local school that mostly had low-income children. We wanted to make Body Walk a bigger community event. So, we asked agencies in the community to plan nutrition or physical activity events during the month that Body Walk would be at that school. KNN invited all of our partner agencies to contribute items that could be used as door prizes, handouts, and other incentives to get people to the local event.

Our goals were to increase the awareness of nutrition and physical activity in the community. We also wanted a project that would link together all of our KNN partners. The KNN partners include agencies such as the Kansas Wheat Commission, the Kansas Beef Council, agencies that serve young children like the WIC Program and Head Start, and agencies that serve older Kansans, like the Congregate Meal Programs. This project would give us, as the Kansas Nutrition Network, a unifying event that all of the partners could focus on.

We partnered with the Barton County Extension Office and the WIC office there, near the elementary school that would be hosting the Body Walk. These would be the primary agencies at the local community. We informed other local agencies in Great Bend, in the area, that if they were doing a nutrition or physical activity some time during that month, we would help out by providing resources for their use.

As I said, Power Panther is evident throughout Body Walk, and Power Panther is the spokescharacter. His message, as you know, is *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*<sup>™</sup> We encouraged everyone in Great Bend to eat smart and play hard. As you know, there are lots of free Power Panther materials available. I fax in orders to the *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*<sup>™</sup> website and then we ship them directly to the local agencies in Great Bend, so that everyone had Power Panther materials that they could use for all ages, not just for young children.

WIC and the local public television station had a wonderful event. They used Sesame Street characters and Clifford the Big Red Dog. Heartland SHARE did speaking engagements in two local community agencies that specifically serve low-income seniors. They donated two free SHARE Boxes. Are any of you familiar with SHARE Programs in your States? They are a good partnership and there are no income guidelines. If you eat, you qualify. If you are not familiar with SHARE—it is called Heartland where we are in the Midwest—you can go to [www.heartlandshare.org](http://www.heartlandshare.org). They have links to many of the other SHARE programs throughout the country.

The Kansas Wheat Commission provided speakers at two events talking about whole grains. They also contributed lots of handouts. TEFAP provided the opportunity for all of the children who went through Body Walk to have a small sack of trail mix, and gave the children information about how their families could sign up for the TEFAP Program.

Many other agencies also contributed items for the local events. Nutrition, Counseling, Education and Services (NCES)—from which some of you may have ordered nutrition education materials—provided lots of cookbooks. The Kansas Beef Council provided wonderful resources; cookbooks and handouts. The Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Kansas provided Kids Kits, which had a washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, a comb, soap, and hand towels for children that were at a shelter in Great Bend and did not have personal hygiene items.

Approximately 500 families participated in events in Great Bend in March of 2004. All of them heard physical activity and nutrition messages. They had handouts and good information provided by many of the KNN partners. One of the best evaluation results is that all of the agencies asked to take part in it again. We were very pleased with that. We have no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of this campaign on changing behavior, but we do know that during that month, when Body Walk was in town, more nutrition and physical activity educational events took place in Great Bend, Kansas.

During 2005, we expanded to three counties, again choosing schools that served most low-income children. Our KNN partners again provided lots of resources and handouts. Great Bend was included again because they were another Body Walk school, but a different school this time. For next spring, we are including Great Bend again for the third year, and one of the other communities that participated last year is again participating during 2006.

Our project is really very simple. We rally around a theme or an event. For us, it is Body Walk. We gather resources from agencies and ship them to the community. The Extension agents and WIC staff interact with many agencies in their communities and help spread the word about this project that we have, pointing out that free resources are available to them.

The first year, we shipped the resources directly to the agencies that were going to do events, but we didn't do that this past year. This past year, we shipped everything directly to the Extension office because we felt that helped make a local contact for the agencies in the communities, and we will do that again this upcoming year.

This is a win-win. The local agencies are excited to have wonderful resources available to them at no cost. The partner agencies get a wonderful way to distribute their resources to groups that they know are going to use them. The people in the community receive terrific nutrition and physical activity education. It really is a win-win for everyone. Thank you.

### **SNAPping Together Across the Commonwealth: Puerto Rico's Model**

**Zulma Y. Solivan Centeno, State Director, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Education, San Juan, PR**

**Jaime Rivera, Director, Caribbean Area Field Office, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, San Juan, PR**

**MS. SOLIVAN:** Our topics for today are: What is SNAP, the priority of SNAP, the chronology, Puerto Rico's plan, the partnership, and where are we?

What is SNAP? I want to repeat the SNAP initiative: "Focus the nutrition education and the promotion of healthy habits and physical activity." The Team Nutrition theme is *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*™ I promote the collaboration between Food and Nutrition Service programs. That is an important part of what we are doing in Puerto Rico.

How did Puerto Rico get involved in SNAP? Under Secretary Bost sent a letter to all the secretaries of the Food and Nutrition Programs in Puerto Rico and all commissioners. I highlighted some parts of the letter that he sent to the Secretary of Health. At that moment, it was Mr. Rullan, the Secretary of Health.

One of my key priorities, as Mr. Bost said this afternoon, is "to improve eating and related lifestyle behavior as a preventive approach to reducing diet-related health problems." Mr. Bost says, "State programs have excellent nutrition education interventions. Our efforts can be enhanced through closer collaboration and coordination among the nutrition programs at the State and local offices." He continued telling us that no one program has the resources to support the type of ongoing and comprehensive interventions required to make behavior

change a reality. “We must engage in effective collaboration at all levels. SNAP provides a unique opportunity to work together, create synergy and results. I ask that you join me in this effort.” That’s what we’re doing. It ends telling us, “I truly believe that working together we will make a difference in your State and ultimately across America.”

Puerto Rico accepted the challenge, and we got involved. My boss, Mr. Jaime Rivera, is going to tell you about the chronology and the challenges that we have, and how we can address them.

**MR. RIVERA:** I am going to walk you, quickly, through a chronology that shows you how we became involved in this effort and what we did.

It wasn’t until late 2003 that we became involved in this. A little while ago, when they asked for a show of hands as to how many people had been to the first nutrition education conference, none of us raised our hands because none of us were here. Later on that year, we received a phone call from Barbara Martin indicating that there were some specific timelines and some deliverables that had been established. The first one was that every State or territory had to come up with an objective and they needed to have that by January.

The first question I asked was, “What is SNAP?” I had no idea what she was talking about. So, she explained this to me and we decided to get serious and start working real quick. I want to go back and make a comment about the Eric Bost letter. That letter had an incredible impact in Puerto Rico. He had been there just shortly prior to sending the letter. So when the secretaries received the letter, it meant more to them because there had been a personal relationship already established.

The moment the first letter hit Dr. Rullan, who was the Secretary of Health at that point, I received a phone call from his Special Assistant on Nutrition, Dr. Vivian Green, who had said that they has just received the Under Secretary’s letter and the Secretary has asked me to call you and let you know that we are right there, we are 100 percent behind him. He has asked me to be his representative on whatever you do, and what is our next step?

Well, that question I couldn’t answer because I wasn’t quite sure. That same afternoon, I got a similar call from a Special Assistant to the then-Secretary of Agriculture. So, this letter really generated a lot of attention in Puerto Rico. I decided, in December, that we needed to come together, get ready to select our goal, get into the flow of things, and kind of catch up with the States that had already been involved with this since earlier in 2003.

I called a meeting of every director or administrator responsible for the FNS programs in Puerto Rico and, at that meeting, we selected our goal. We kept on having subsequent meetings. There is a mention there about a brief to the Department of Family on a special agriculture project. That is something that we as a group looked at and have now put on hold. It is a potential source of funding for some of the things that we want to do with SNAP. It is authorized by the legislation that created the block grant that replaced the Food Stamp

Program in 1991. It lets the Commonwealth take some funds out of the block grants for special projects to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables in particular.

We started to work with some of the existing coalitions in Puerto Rico. We became a partner of the Department of Health's "Health Recommends" initiative. We established a work group to help the Executive Steering Committee, to take direction from this committee, and then be able to meet more frequently and develop some strategies and tactics we have been working with. Then, we took our show on the road and started to build an alliance with some of the partners. In March, the Puerto Rico Milk Industry became a member of our coalition. That same afternoon, we briefed the Puerto Rico Food and Nutrition Commission.

I made a presentation on SNAP to the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Nutrition Education Summit in March of that year. Also, I briefed the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians, who are also a part of the coalition. In March, I also briefed the FNS Administrator who was in Puerto Rico to celebrate National Nutrition Month. Both groups kept on meeting continuously, the work group and the Executive Steering Committee.

We continued to brief potential partners and get their endorsement. They include the Puerto Rico Chapter of the American Dietetic Association, the Puerto Rico Nutrition Committee, the Department of Recreation and Sports, and the Graduate School of the University of Puerto Rico's School of Public Health. We have continued to meet quite frequently and develop a series of tactics that Zulma will talk to you about.

We had our general election on November 6th. Although the same party won reelection, it was a completely different administration and, all of a sudden, the Executive Steering Committee was Zulma and I, because we lost all of our other members. We had to regroup again in 2005 and welcome new members as new political appointments were made and started working together as a group. As Barbara said, we have to form and storm, and do that whole process all over again. But, we picked up steam again and are looking forward to a real exciting 2006. I will turn it back to Zulma at this point.

**MS. SOLIVAN:** Our goal is to educate individuals, families, and communities about healthy dietary patterns and regular physical activity based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. That goal has an objective which is that the USDA nutrition assistance program will establish support partnerships and collaborative efforts to educate individuals, families, and communities about healthy dietary patterns and regular physical activity using a simple and uniform message.

That objective brings us to the specific objectives that are to identify each agency's current activities and initiatives to promote healthy dietary patterns and regular physical activity. To reach these objectives, the SNAP steering committee, that Jaime mentioned, and a working group, developed an activity plan. This action plan was identified as PIENSA. PIENSA means "to think." SNAP becomes PIENSA. For this part I am going to mention some slogans in Spanish.

The established work group developed the intervention. We chose a name and slogan. Puerto Rico developed its own name. It has now become PIENSA, the “Plan Inter-agencial de Educación en Nutrición, Salud, y Acción.” That means “Interagency Plan for Nutrition Education, Health, and Action,” and that slogan is “PIENSA Puerto Rico...Camina hacia una Buena Nutrición,” and the translation is “Think, Puerto Rico...Walk Toward a Good Nutrition.” That message will be used in all of our programs. We established a support partnership with other groups and we have to identify financial resources to reach the goal.

For PIENSA to obtain its goals, some of the strategies or tactics are to develop a multimedia campaign on healthy dietary patterns and regular physical activity during 2005. Each FNS program will emphasize its priorities such as: breastfeeding, physical activity, obesity, fruit and vegetable consumption, and healthy dietary patterns. We have to include the PIENSA slogan in all the nutrition education material that we have.

On our Executive Steering Committee, our chair is Mr. Jaime Rivera, but we will be changing the contact person. Here in this room is another director of our program, Maria De Los Angeles Diaz. She belongs to the Department of Health as one of our collaborators. The coalitions are in the Puerto Rico College of Nutrition, the Puerto Rico committees, ADA, Puerto Rico Department of Recreation, and the Department of Physical Education program in our Department of Education.

Where are we? We established the support partnerships, identified each agency’s activities, and identified the name and the slogans. Identifying financial resources is ongoing. Revising the plan for fiscal years 2005 and 2006 is ongoing. There is under consideration a special evaluation program, and Evalua PIENSA is ongoing.

I finish with this thought: Together we will make the difference. “Think, Puerto Rico... Walk Toward a Good Nutrition.” Thank you.