

Incorporating Nutrition in the Title V Five-Year Needs Assessment

FOR **PUBLIC HEALTH
NUTRITIONISTS**



Title V Needs Assessment Overview

The Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funds the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant,¹ a federal-state partnership, to support 59 states and jurisdictions (states)² to improve the health and well-being of the nation's mothers, children, including children with special health care needs, and their families. As nutrition is paramount to the health and well-being of the MCH population, this document provides public health nutritionists some suggestions for how they can support the Title V MCH Block Grant Program.

Once every five years, each state is required by law to conduct a statewide needs assessment, which includes a comprehensive review of MCH population needs, program capacity, and partnerships/collaborations that are critical components of a state's system of care. The next statewide Five-Year Needs Assessment report is due on July 15, 2020.³ This report serves as the cornerstone for the development of the five-year State Action Plan. For the five-year action plan, states identify 7-10 Title V MCH priority needs. The priority needs inform the selection of at least five [National Performance Measures](#)

(NPMs),⁴ and the development of state-initiated [Evidence-based or -informed Strategy Measures](#) (ESMs).⁵ States may also opt to develop one or more [State Performance Measures](#) (SPMs)⁶ to address priority needs that are not fully addressed by the NPMs.

Nutrition and Title V

Early life experiences impact the health trajectory throughout the life course. Proper nutrition during pregnancy, having access to healthy foods throughout the life course, and making healthy food choices are all upstream factors that improve maternal and child health.

Two of the Title V NPMs (NPM 4: Breastfeeding and NPM 8: Physical Activity) and one [National Outcome Measure](#) (NOM)⁷ (NOM 20: Obesity) relate directly to nutrition. In addition, several states track nutrition-related SPMs. Incorporating MCH nutrition in the needs assessment process can lay the groundwork for a preventative approach to the five-year action plan.



Examples of Connections Between MCH Outcomes and Nutrition

- ✓ **Nutrition and weight status prior to and during pregnancy** may modify pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth, maternal morbidity (via gestational hypertension/preeclampsia), gestational diabetes, and childhood obesity.⁸
- ✓ **Adherence to a healthy diet before and during pregnancy** may reduce maternal morbidity by decreasing the risk of preeclampsia, pregnancy-induced hypertension,⁹ gestational diabetes and resulting large for gestational age infants,¹⁰ and may also reduce the risk of preterm birth.¹¹
- ✓ **Preventing bullying of overweight children** may reduce subsequent excessive weight gain.¹²
- ✓ **Increasing food security** can decrease the probability of weight-related chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, and certain cancers.¹³

Nutrition-related ESMs are outlined in “[Incorporating Nutrition into the Title V MCH Services Block Grant National Performance Measures](#).”¹⁴

Public Health Nutritionists Can Participate

- ✓ **Be at the table.** Contact the state MCH Director and volunteer to participate in the needs assessment. Use MCHB’s [State Contact Directory](#)¹⁵ to identify state MCH Directors.
- ✓ **Disseminate the evidence.** Keep current on the latest nutrition research and share ways to use available nutrition data.
- ✓ **Connect other nutrition programs to Title V.** Recommend to state MCH Directors names of state and community-level nutrition partners, e.g., food banks, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), Extension food support/education programs, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), School Nutrition Programs, and Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP), who can participate on focus groups, provide key informant interviews, and comment on draft action plans.

Participation of public health nutritionists in the state Title V needs assessment and action plan processes can contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated approach for improving the health of America’s mothers, children and families.

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Last reviewed on 4-2020

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