



2008 Key Issue Identification Form

Instructions: Each county, program area and specialists as a whole are to identify key issues that their programming activities currently address, or should address. For each issue, craft a 2-3 sentence issue statement that outlines, in brief, what the issue at hand is and why it is important or relevant. The issue statements should be crafted based on objective data, as well as input from Specialists, County Educators, Advisory Councils, and input from other key stakeholders.

1. In a few words, please come up with a title that succinctly defines the issue:

Preventing Obesity: a multi-faceted approach

2. Please describe the issue in 2-3 sentences (i.e. craft an issue statement that describes what the issue at hand is and why it is a significant issue):

1. The percentage of obese and overweight in adults and children in NH continues to increase putting adults and children at increased risk for health related diseases.
2. The cost of obesity and overweight to individuals, society and healthcare continues to increase putting a demand on health care dollars.

3. In 2-3 sentences, please describe what the public value for Extension to address this issue is/would be. (The term public value refers to not only the value of our outreach activities to community *participants*, but, more importantly, the value of these activities to those who do not *directly* benefit from these activities. The purpose of the Public Value approach is to secure support for activities with strong public value and identify those activities that do not have strong public value. The following is an example of a public value statement that addresses the issue of loss of rural landscape to development and other growth-related pressures.)

Through obesity prevention, we would anticipate a reduction in the demand for healthcare, thus stabilizing healthcare costs. This would occur as a result of being able to decrease the incidence of chronic illnesses related to obesity. In addition, there may be benefits in the workplace as a result of decreased absenteeism and increased productivity. We envision a multidisciplinary approach and would target the Baby Boomer and over generation. Helping this cohort of middle aged individuals make lifestyle changes, would in turn help families and children.

4. Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue (key data might include demographic trend data, University priorities, issues identified in plans/policies of other agencies and organizations, stakeholder input, etc.).

The prevalence rate of NH adults who are overweight or obese has grown steadily over the past decade and continues to rise. In 1995, 15.1% of NH adults were obese compare to 22.4% in 2006. Although this is somewhat below the national average of 25.1%, NH rates are higher than

those of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont. NH also has a significant number of overweight adults with an incidence of 38.3% compared to a national rate of 36.5%

The US population is aging. By 2006, New Hampshire's percentage of adults 65 years of age or older was the same as the US average – 12.4%. As a result of the aging baby boomer population, the US Census Bureau projects that the older adult population will soar to nearly 20% of the US population by 2030. Older adults are more likely to have a chronic health condition with 80% having at least one condition and 50% having at least two. Lifestyle factors such as diet will become increasingly important in maintaining and enhancing health and overall quality of life as the population ages.

5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?

By tackling this issue, UNH Cooperative Extension will strive to provide New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information on obesity prevention. This will enhance their ability to make informed decisions to improve their health and well being and in turn reduce healthcare costs which may play a significant role in improving the NH economy

A multi-faceted approach will enhance the effectiveness of reaching target audience members. Further, the UNH Nutrition Program is focusing on obesity prevention.

6. What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.

Nutrition Connections works closely with youth and families to provide life skills education in the areas of nutrition, food budgeting and shopping, cooking and food safety. Federal funding requires the focus be on families and youth with limited incomes. The HEALNH website is designed for the consumer and professional. Areas of focus include nutrition, physical activity, motivation, and healthy communities. Information is tied to the Healthy Eating, Active Living initiatives for NH citizens.

Family and Consumer Resources Educators and Specialists are currently examining the nutrition needs of non-limited resource target audiences in the state. Initial plans have focused on programs related to food management skills in response to current economic conditions. Other programming efforts include basic nutrition and physical fitness information.

7. What other organizations/agencies are currently addressing this issue?

There are several organizations in the state that are working on this issue: hospitals, wellness programs in schools, worksite wellness programs, insurance companies, and some governmental agencies such as the Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Services (WIC.) The New Hampshire HEAL initiative will be encouraging community based initiatives throughout the state. However this is an enormous, multifaceted issue which can and needs to be attacked on many fronts and by many organizations.

- 8. If Extension does not currently address this issue, how might we address this issue in the future?** (Consider staff capacity, financial resources, volunteer capacity, and potential partnerships with other agencies/organizations, etc.).

Cooperative Extension has addressed this issue with some audiences but has limited staff capacity and financial resources to address this issue on its own. Partnerships could be developed with AARP, senior centers and retirement communities, worksites, and community groups which offer programs for the population we have identified.

Please Complete and Email to Lisa Townson by October 23, 2008

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Representing: Family & Consumer Resources, Nutrition Connections, 4-H Youth Development