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Dietitians Corner

by **Barbara Wakeen, MA, RD, LD, CFP**

Happy New Year to Everyone! Since the last Insider publication, I attended two conferences where Correctional Health Care, Foodservice and Dietitians are highly recognized.

In October, I attended the American Dietetic Association's Food and Nutrition Conference and Exhibition (FNCE), in St. Louis, Missouri. This was formerly referred to as attending "ADA". This is the national conference for the American Dietetic Association where dietitians from around the world attend.

The new Correctional Foodservice and Nutrition Manual made its debut at this time. Many of the contributing authors are ACFSA member dietitians. Thanks for sharing your expertise! The manual may be purchased through ADA at 800-877-1600 ext. 5000. Ask for item #5023. Cost is \$19.95 plus \$5.00 shipping. It will be available at the ACFSA Spring Conference also.

The Corrections Subunit of CD-HCF held their annual meeting recently. Most of the dietitians in attendance are also ACFSA members and a few are soon-to-be. **Joe Montgomery, MS, RD, LD, CFP** was introduced as my Co-Chair of the Corrections Subunit of CD-HCF. Congratulations Joe, and thank you!

The main items for discussion were the availability of the new corrections manual, religious diets, cook-chill operations, re-subscription to the eml, and the availability of a hard copy directory of members.

There were with representatives from state, county and contracted facilities around the country. With regard to religious diets, amazingly (or not), everyone has different procedures, ranging from a meat-free alternative available to the entire population to a "Common Fare" type menu.

In November, I attended the National Commission on Correctional Health Care Conference (NCCHC) in Albuquerque, NM, where I was elected to the board as a representative of the American Dietetics Association (ADA).

NCCHC, it is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on the quality of care in all types of correctional facilities, and it recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. NCCHC is supported by 35 national organizations representing the fields of health, law and corrections, one of which is ADA.

(I found this truly intriguing that there are 35 organizations with a supporting interest in correctional health care. As foodservice specialists we don't often realize all of the units that support a correctional system.)

NCCHC offers many services and programs, including a voluntary accreditation program, designed to help correctional health systems provide efficient, quality health care. The accreditation program is similar to the ACA accreditation, but focuses only on health care related issues. The program is based on national standards established by the health, legal and corrections professions.

Part of the accreditation process involves a "Nutrition and Medical Diet Standard". The standard addresses serving an adequate diet referencing the Food Guide Pyramid, meeting the RDA's and serving medical diets based on diet menus or an approved diet manual. The standard discussion encourages a "Heart-Healthy" diet to reduce the number of medical diets.

One of the "Compliance Indicators" within this standard involves direct participation from a dietitian whereby menus and diet menus must be reviewed semi-annually by a registered or licensed dietitian. Appropriate documentation must be provided to substantiate the review. Another indicator references the provision of diet counseling by health services in the event of noncompliance, not punishment through the diet. For further information on NCCHC visit their web site at www.NCCHC.org.

While participating at the conference, I encountered many medical staff who voiced concerns about the need for guidance from a dietitian regarding menu items; excessive calories, fat, and sodium content of menus; preparation of medical diets; foodservice staff ability to prepare diets; and determining Ideal Body Weights. They have an appreciation for the Food Administrators' ability to serve a cost-effective meal, but not at the expense of the inmates' health, i.e. 4000-5000 calories, elevated lipid levels, and excessive weight gain, to mention a few. They were happy to have available a nutrition reference manual specific to corrections.

As correctional food service and nutrition professionals we continue to face the challenge of

communication between medical and foodservice departments. "Standards", "compliance" and "communication" have become staple words in our daily routines that enable us to provide cost-effective, nutritionally balanced meals meeting the government, medical and religious guidelines in a sanitary environment.

Noteworthy News

Chris Althaus, RD, CD has accepted the position of Dietetic Services Director and Chief, Food Management Section, for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. Christine is a Registered Dietitian, and has worked in the State of Wisconsin DOC for 11 years. Chris has been a member of ACFSA for 10 years and is currently the Immediate Past President of the Wisconsin Chapter.

Joe Montgomery, MS, RD, LD, CFP has accepted the position of Co-Chair for the Corrections Sub-unit of CD-HCF. Joe has worked for the Illinois Department of Corrections over 21 years at same facility, Graham Correctional Center. He is currently the Food Service Director. Following 8 years in Corrections, Joe pursued his RD (1997) and masters (1999) at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. When Joe started in Corrections, Illinois only had 12 prisons—now there are over 38.

The Dietitians in Corrections will be hosting a luncheon at the ACFSA Spring Conference session on Sunday, April 14th, entitled Latest Research in Vegetarian Nutrition and Application for Correctional Menus. For further information, visit the ACFSA web site www.ACFSA.com.

Meetings and Notices

As always, we welcome your questions and input on topics that are of interest to you as ACFSA members. If you would like to submit articles, questions or any other communication, please contact me at (330)-499-0809 or email bwakeen@neo.rr.com or visit the ACFSA web site at www.ACFSA.org or the CDHCF Corrections Sub-unit website at www.CDHCF.org.

Can We Help You?

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