

## Searching for Dollars for Fruits and Vegetables

Word from Washington is that everyone in Congress is talking about fruits and vegetables. They are worried that the way America eats is driving up medical costs.

For proof, consider bills that have been introduced in Congress to influence the next Farm Bill. The most popular (H.R. 1551 and H.R. 1600) have been endorsed by half the members of the U.S. House including Pennsylvanians Brady, Doyle, English, Gerlach, Patrick Murphy, Tim Murphy, Platts, Sestak and Schwartz. These bills would nearly quadruple funding for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, quadruple funding for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and raise funding for the school-based Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program by over 3,000 percent! They also would ramp up USDA fruit and vegetable purchases for schools and

for The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Over in the Senate, at least four bills have been introduced to cover the same ground. One (S. 1160) has been co-sponsored by Senator Bob Casey.

Does this mean fruits and vegetables will get a big boost in the next Farm Bill? Probably, although finding the money to fund expansion will be a problem. The committees working on the new Farm Bill will be creating what is called "a baseline bill," which means no increase in overall

spending. Thus, increases in spending for fruits and vegetables would need to be carved out of existing programs.

And there's the rub. Each of these bills positions fruits and vegetables within the Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill. That means the off-sets would occur by cutting what currently accounts for over 98 percent of Nutrition Title funding: the Food Stamp Program.

Congress can find a better way. First, it should acknowledge that much of the proposed new spending on fruits

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## Food Programs at Risk in Budget Show-Down

Funding for the State Food Purchase Program and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is at risk in the coming show-down between the Republican Senate and Governor Ed Rendell.

The problem isn't money. The State General Fund will end this fiscal year with a surplus estimated to be \$500 million. Moreover, the Governor's Budget Office expects General Fund revenue to grow next year by at least \$1 billion over this year's total. So that strongly suggests enough money to grow this year's General Fund budget by \$1.5 billion, a 5.7 percent increase. That would be in line with last year's increase and well below the all-state average.

But Senate Appropriations Chairman Gibson Armstrong (R-Lancaster) has said repeatedly that the state budget should not grow any faster than the rate of inflation. Senate Republicans are expected to line up in support of Armstrong and pass a budget that limits growth to 2-3 percent

That spells big trouble for the food programs in the PA Department of Agriculture's budget. The Governor's request already included cuts of

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# Republican Policy Committee Distorts Welfare Debate

In public hearings held during May in Williamsport and Lancaster, the House Republican Policy Committee continued its attacks on the PA Department of Public Welfare and Rendell Administration welfare policies. By and large, the hearings have been staged events. Only critics of Rendell Administration welfare policies have been allowed to testify.

The effort is reminiscent of the 1980s, when President Reagan made frequent headlines by allegations of "welfare queens" who defrauded taxpayers. It seems to be working all over again; newspaper accounts of the hearings have dutifully reported the inaccurate allegations without clarifying what is going on. House Republicans are betting it will help them win back the House in 2008.

The Committee's effort, led by Allegheny County's Mike Turzai, starts with two simple facts. First, spending through the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW) has grown by nearly \$5 billion over the years that Ed Rendell has been Governor. Second, the number of individuals receiving services from DPW has increased by approximately 360,000 during that time. Having captured public attention with these dramatic numbers, the Committee changes the subject and starts talking about cheaters who refuse to work and instead draw a monthly welfare check from DPW. That makes people angry.

It's the classic bait-and-switch. The increase in DPW spending is driven primarily by more people enrolling in DPW's Medical Assistance Program (MA). Last year 1.8 million Pennsylvanians received health care through MA; in the coming year, that

will grow to nearly 2 million individuals. Children, the disabled and seniors make up nearly all of this caseload. What they are receiving is health care, not a check. The money is going to hospitals, doctors and other medical providers. And yes, total dollars being spent every year is climbing rapidly, so fast that we all should be concerned.

Who should we blame for the growth in health care spending? That's where the House Republican Policy Committee changes the subject and starts offering testimony about welfare cheaters who collect monthly checks through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. It makes sensational headlines and stirs up old prejudices. The *Sunday News* in Lancaster led its front-page story with a reference to a welfare recipient in Philadelphia who had 93 welfare cards. Next, it reported the \$5 billion increase in welfare spending. The rest of the article was all about TANF. There was not a word about spending on health care.

Cathleen Palm, coordinator of the PA Welfare Coalition, has been attempting to correct the record. The *Sun Gazette* in Williamsport did a follow-up story that quoted Palm. But it failed to discuss health care and left readers with the impression that this debate is all about people who receive welfare checks.

Meanwhile, Turzai and the House Republican Policy Committee are trying to generate headlines with a plan to require DPW to fingerprint everyone who applies for welfare services – a plan that Republican governors have determined is not cost-effective. We can expect more bait-and-switch. After throwing out the big "welfare" numbers – nearly all of which have to do with health care – the fingerprinting will focus on people who apply for cash assistance or food assistance. But not people who apply for help with medical care, nursing home services or free meals at the local senior center. The point, it seems, is to stigmatize the kind of welfare services that "other people" receive.

## Advocacy Work in D.C.



Talking about the Farm Bill are Ted Mann, PA Rep from MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; Kasey Gillette, Ag Specialist from the Office of Senator Bob Casey; and Berry Friesen from Hunger Action.

# Child Wellness Hearing: Who Stood for What?

For the first time since 1992 the General Assembly has put breakfast "on the table". Rep. Tony Payton (D-Philadelphia) has introduced H.B. 908, which requires schools with 20 percent or more low-income children to offer a breakfast program. Such a fix is long overdue, as Pennsylvania has been slipping in the national school breakfast rankings.

The second component of Payton's bill is to improve the nutritional environment of schools. The bill provides financial incentives for incorporating the PA Department of Education's *Guidelines for Nutritional Standards for Competitive Foods in PA Schools*. Schools that agree to limit the french fries and "Little Debbie's" would get a higher reimbursement rate from the state for meals sold through the federal National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs.

The House Education Committee heard various perspectives on the bill on May 2nd; some of the testimony was surprising.

Speaking against the nutritional standards incentive were the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials and, through a letter read by Representative Stairs, the PA School Boards Association (PSBA). Notwithstanding the fact that more than two-thirds of PA schools have already adopted PDE's nutritional standards, these organizations voiced concern about the financial and operational difficulties the standards would cause. To her credit, Lee Ann Hocker of the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania, testified very positively about school breakfast but stopped short of saying we need this breakfast legislation in Pennsylvania.

Speaking in support of H.B. 908 were Caroline Allen from the Pennsylvania PTA, Shauna Ponton from Just Harvest, John Weidman from the Food Trust, and Sue Mitchem from the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center. The Food Trust and the Pennsylvania PTA honed in on the importance of the nutritional environment in schools. Others like Just Harvest and Hunger Action focused on the fact that many PA kids do not have access to school breakfast in areas where there is severe need. They also reminded the Committee that Pennsylvania is losing \$24 million federal dollars each year that would come through an expansion of school breakfast.

What will come of this hearing? We don't know yet. The Education Committee is reviewing the bill and the Governor is expected to push for its adoption through the budget

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## Director's Column



In early June, my wife and I flew to California to attend the first-ever Friesen Family Reunion. The event prompted me to dig into my family's history. Predictably, I found only farmers for at least 200 years. My parents were farmers too but not I or any of my brothers or cousins.

Our departure from our agricultural heritage is a familiar story shared by millions of Americans. Few of us have any farmers in our families and few of us have any acquaintances who are farmers. Their lives seem a world apart. Only through gardening do we catch an inkling of the intimate connection between the land, its produce and the food on our tables.

In Europe, farmers are highly esteemed and national policy is designed to keep their numbers up. Here, the attitude is a little different. We value efficiency in our agriculture because that is the American way. It keeps food cheap and allows us to spend our money on more important stuff. So in contrast to Europeans, we are most inclined to admire farmers who oversee big operations and look like businessmen.

From what I know of my family's history, they didn't experience hunger. On the other hand, during the '30s the drought and the recession forced them to sell their farms in Nebraska and start over elsewhere. They could have used a Farm Bill, I suppose: some public mechanism to help them stay on their lands and produce food for people to eat.

Now Congress is preparing the 2007 Farm Bill. Along the way, it will decide whether it wants more farmers or fewer and whether it wants more corn or more vegetables. Decades from now, our children will experience the impact of those decisions as they eat their dinners. Here's hoping Congress gets it right!



## Strengthening the Food Resource Safety Net Conference 2007

This year's **Strengthening the Food Resource Safety Net Conference** was the biggest one yet. Over 220 people attended the two-day conference hosted by Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center and the Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network. This year's focus was on eating competence, advocacy around the Farm Bill, child nutrition, and food security. Attendees came from a range of backgrounds

including anti-hunger and child advocates, nutritionists and dietitians, government administrators, and academics. The two-day conference offered workshops on ecSatter, the 2007 Farm Bill, the connection between health and hunger, school breakfast, advocacy, promoting fruits and vegetables, and gardening as a part of the food safety net.

The highlighted speaker this year was nationally-recognized author and feeding and eating specialist Ellyn Satter. Satter presented "Understanding and Applying ecSatter: The Satter Eating Competence Model" throughout the second day of the conference. In her workshops, Satter focused on understanding and trusting your body's internal controls of food intake. She also compared the ecSatter model to the conventional model of eating attitudes and approaches to nutrition. Drawing upon other studies and her own work, she provided the crowd with evidence of the effectiveness of ecSatter. Furthermore, she criticized contemporary weight-loss practices and challenged the idea that obesity is the problem and that restrictive eating is the solution. For many, Satter provided an unorthodox approach to nutrition and eating which some found eye-opening and others controversial. (See related article "Policy Implications of ecSatter" on opposite page.)



The evening speaker was Dr. Maureen Black from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. In her presentation, Dr. Black discussed her work with failure-to-thrive (FTT) in the Baltimore GROW Clinic. She discussed the connection between food insecurity and child health, especially FTT and obesity. Her main tools for fighting FTT are the video-taping of parents feeding their children and the principals of eating competency. The video-taping allows the clinician to review parent-child interactions, to praise them for what they are doing right and to help them improve upon such things as reading a child's cues and working with his/her feeding style. Dr.

Black stressed that caregivers need to focus on the nutritional requirements and developmental feeding skills of their children and to provide scheduled meals and a pleasant and modeling setting. Clinicians must work with them on parent-child communication, division of responsibility, and avoiding negotiating or emotionalizing meals. She also advocated the monitoring of children's growth and development and the tracking of Body Mass Index (BMI).

Lynn Parker, the Director of Child Nutrition Programs and Nutrition Policy at the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) in Washington, D.C. spoke to attendees during lunch on the final day about food and nutrition policy. As an advocate, Parker shared her enthusiasm for such work with the crowd. In her pitch for the top ten reasons why everyone should get involved, she included one all too often forgotten: it's fun! She also stressed, though, that nutrition policy, specifically with the 2007 Farm Bill and child nutrition programs, is imperative to strengthening the safety net for food-insecure and low-income individuals and families and improving their access to better health through food.



Frank Maisano, the recently retired Pennsylvania WIC Director, received an award for his dedication and work with the WIC population in Pennsylvania from Hunger Action and the PA NEN. Maisano had served a total 26 years in the WIC program (24 as the Director) and built the program into one of the most innovative and cost-effective in the US. His work is widely respected by anti-hunger advocates, and he has frequently reached out to those advocates as allies. Maisano plans to spend the summer fishing in Alaska and then will return to Central PA to pursue other interests.

# ecSatter: Would it Lead to Better Nutrition Policy?

Ellyn Satter, the featured speaker at this year's *Strengthening the Food Resource Safety Net Conference*, presented Satter's eating competence (ecSatter) approaches and applications. (See related article on opposite page).

According to Satter, there exists a way for both adults and children to eat which is satisfying but not excessive. The key word is *trust*. Acknowledging, trusting and acting on what lies inside is basic to mental health *and* nutritional health. Even the most out-of-control eater can learn to trust internal signals of hunger, appetite and satiety and to trust their body (and their child's body) to know how much to eat. Such trust depends on reliably providing satisfying food and on trusting one's own body to be the size and shape it needs to be. According to ecSatter, competent eaters: 1) have positive attitudes about eating and food; 2) have food acceptance skills that support eating an ever-increasing variety of available food; 3) have internal regulation skills that allow intuitively consuming enough food to give energy and stamina to support stable body weight; and 4) have skills and resources for managing the food context and orchestrating family meals.

Satter offers this approach in contrast to conventional public health nutrition methods. She openly criticizes the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid* as promoting restrictive eating. Satter argues that restrictive eating encourages disordered/obsessive eating which can fuel overweight and obesity. At the same time, she argues that society is

overly concerned with weight. According to Satter, a high Body Mass Index (BMI) is not associated with mortality. Satter also suggests that nutritionists remove the "shoulds" and "oughts" from nutrition education; she discourages educators from promoting fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Satter understands that her approach is a new way of thinking for many. During her presentation, she invited participants to rate their level of cognitive dissonance. Participants identified themselves with all levels: no dissonance at all, significant dissonance, and the most dissonance they had ever felt. Satter's presentation ignited a debate among participants as to how it applies to public policy and nutrition education.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid* are key building blocks in U.S. food and nutrition policy. Participant Rayshiang Lin shares, "I am afraid that the disdain for the *Dietary Guidelines/MyPyramid*, which is supported by hundreds of peer-reviewed articles, reports, and monographs, will cause confusion among nutritionists and clients. I disagree that we should stray away from the leadership of CDC, NHLBI, IOM and USDA, which are the major funding sources of most of our [public health nutrition] programs."

Some support incorporating non-conventional methods, such as ecSatter, to promote eating behavior change. "Variety and moderation still remain the key to healthier food choices, but we haven't been especially effective in teaching those concepts. These lessons need to be

taught and modeled at a very young age so our youth can develop healthier ways at looking at the role food plays in their lives. We need to teach people how to listen to their internal cues, and disassociate some of the negative emotions with their eating choices. No small task, but the concept of developing eating competence is an alternative in the right direction," argues Shirley Sword, State WIC Nutrition Coordinator.

In her presentation Satter presents a "hierarchy of food needs": 1) enough food, 2) familiar/decent food, 3) reliable access to food, 4) good-tasting food, 5) novel food, and 6) instrumental food. Based on her hierarchy, it seems Satter supports food and nutrition programs, such as the Food Stamp Program and the National School Lunch Program. However, when asked her perspective on such programs, Satter advocated for less governmental direction and more individual responsibility.

Berry Friesen, executive director of Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center, worries, "Satter's approach would prompt us to exaggerate the role of the individual and to ignore other factors that strongly influence how we eat. Sure, it's flattering to hear her say we should 'trust ourselves to eat as much as we are hungry for, to eat the food that we like, and to feel comfortable with our enjoyment of food and eating.' I'm sure food company executives are supportive of this because anyone who does marketing knows individual autonomy and choice are highly malleable and that people can be convinced to want all sorts of things that lead to ill-health."

# One Great Lunch with 8 Great Chefs

Chef Ed Byrem polishes his Chicken Chipotle Chowder.



*Fruits/Veggies...from page 1* and vegetables (such as the school-based Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program) is not designed to benefit low-income families and would most directly benefit fruit and vegetable growers. It is, in short, a growers' subsidy and should be funded out of the Commodity Title.



Tracy Pawelski of Giant Foods receives recognition for being the longest running major sponsor of "One Great Lunch".

Second, Congress should recognize that the most effective way to encourage more fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income families is by building a fruit and vegetable incentive into the Food Stamp Program. Households that buy fruits and vegetables with their EBT cards could receive bonus payments, either as a credit on their card or in a voucher that would be redeemed for additional purchases of fruits and vegetables. The USDA recently highlighted such an approach in its publication, *Amber Waves*, and California is implementing the concept through state legislation.

Chefs John Reis and Bob Roebuck prepare Blackened Salmon with Tropical Fruit Salsa.



Sovereign Bank's Senior Vice-President of Retail, Nancy May, receives an award for their support of the Center.

Third, to make funding available for such innovations, Congress should follow the lead of Richard Lugar, the Republican Senator from Indiana. He has introduced FARM21, a reform that would reduce subsidies for wheat, rice, corn, soybeans and cotton and make \$20 billion available for other purposes. Lugar's proposal, which includes an additional \$5 billion for the Food Stamp Program, is the only proposal introduced thus far that avoids a fight for funding between advocates for low-income consumers and advocates for fruit and vegetable growers.

3 Great Chefs Ed Byrem, Tom Long, and Charlie Gipe work out the details for their demonstrations.



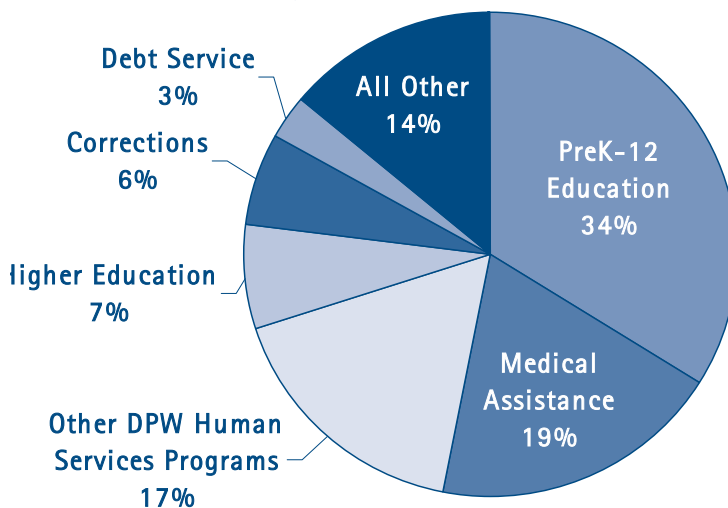
This is a critical time in the formation of national food policy and the work nutrition educators do every day is front-and-center. To add your voice, go to [www.pahunger.org](http://www.pahunger.org) and use the e-FAX feature.

*Show-Down...from page 1*

\$750,000 from the State Food Purchase Program and \$1,000,000 from the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. After the Senate has finished whittling down the Governor's plan, food programs may be cut back even more.

So why would food programs be cut \$1,750,000 in a budget that is growing by at least 2-3 percent? As illustrated in the chart to the right, more than half of General Fund expenses occur in just two lines of the state budget: PreK-12 education and Medical Assistance. Other DPW programs, such as child protection and mental health services, take up another huge chunk. Many of these services are mandated under federal law and the State has no choice but to pay the bill. What's worse, the federal government has been cutting back on its share. According to the Governor, in the coming year Pennsylvania will need to come up with \$718 million just to replace lost federal dollars for federally-mandated services. In short, all the Senate's 2-3 percent would be used up paying for a handful of very expensive programs. Everyone else – including people at risk of hunger – would suffer.

**2006-07  
General Fund Expenditures  
\$27.3 Billion**



*Governor's Executive Budget, Budget in Brief 2007-08.*

In the show-down between the Governor and Senate leaders, the Democratic-controlled House holds the balance of power. If it goes along with the Senate, the Governor will face a tough choice: sign an ugly budget or push the State into crisis by a veto. If the House supports the Governor, then the show-down could linger well into summer.

Public opinion will carry the day. If the public thinks a 2-3 percent spending cap is a good idea, then food programs will be cut deeply and hunger will increase in Pennsylvania in the coming year. If the public thinks spending growth should be in line with available revenue, then hungry people still have hope.

**Does Your Rep Support Summer Food?**

Most Pennsylvania congressmen who represent rural areas have signed a letter calling on the House Agriculture Committee to reauthorize the Summer Food Service Program to operate open enrollment sites in areas where 40 percent of the school children qualify for free or reduced price school meals. Signers included Todd Platts, Chris Carney, Bill Shuster, Jason Altmire, Tim Murphy, Paul Kanjorski, Jim Gerlach, Mike Doyle and Jack Murtha. Members with rural constituencies who refused to sign were Phil English, Joe Pitts and John Peterson.

**March Pantry Survey Shows Improvement**

Here's good news. Based on reports to Hunger Action from 564 pantries, the average number of households served per pantry during March was 126. That's down from 139 households in March 2006 and is the first drop since the survey began in 2002. Possible explanations include two events that occurred in January: the \$1.10 per hour increase in the minimum wage and DPW's addition of 34,000 SSI recipients to the Food Stamp Program through its CAP initiative.

*Education Hearing...from page 3* process later this month. Hunger Action believes this is a rare chance to support a holistic approach to child health – offering school breakfast and assuring healthy food in schools. To register your support of H.B. 908 and S.B. 753 (the Senate version), efax your legislators at [www.pahunger.org](http://www.pahunger.org).

**Show your appreciation for the PA Hunger Advocate by giving \$25 to PA Hunger Action Center this month.**



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## Philadelphia Coalition Looks for Solution to Childhood Obesity

The Philadelphia Urban Food and Fitness Alliance (PUFFA) has received a 2-year, \$500,000 capacity building grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to improve the quality of life for people in the Philadelphia Area. White Dog Community Enterprises and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health are the lead organizations on the grant; other organizations included in PUFFA are the Health Promotion Council, Urban Nutrition Initiative, and the Food Trust.

According to the press release, PUFFA is implementing a community participatory approach to "develop a comprehensive community action plan including targeted neighborhood interventions and city-wide policy recommendations to reduce the impact of childhood obesity."

Six key action teams (target areas of the grant) will be created to assess the health environment in Philly and make proposals for interventions that would lower the incidence of obesity. Those action teams include: nutrition, physical activity, sustainable foods, local food access, the built environment, and youth. The leads on these teams may be members from the organizations listed above, but community members are to make up the majority of representation. A delegate assembly also will be developed from community members and representatives from the six key action teams.

Hunger is not a target area, but PUFFA plans to incorporate hunger issues into the nutrition team, and perhaps it could be also included in the sustainable foods team.

If the capacity building is successful, PUFFA has an opportunity to secure up to a 10-year, \$5 million grant from the Kellogg Foundation to implement their plan.

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**Email:** [info@pahunger.org](mailto:info@pahunger.org)  
**Website:** [www.pahunger.org](http://www.pahunger.org)  
**Telephone:** 717.233.6705