TO: Government Affairs Contacts
Nutrition Working Group
FR: Jessica Hixson, Director of Government Affairs
RE: Dietary Guidelines Update

Good Afternoon,

On July 15, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) released its completed Scientific Advisory Report, which will serve as recommendations to USDA/HHS as they write the final *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)*. Attached to this email is an overview of the over 800-page report, with the key conclusions outlined for each chapter. Key takeaways for SNAC members are outlined below:

DGAC Addresses Snacking

For the first time, the DGAC suggested that USDA/HHS consider that a reduction in snacks in favor of meals, may help individuals better meet dietary recommendations. The statement, included in *Part D. Chapter 13: Frequency of Eating*, is as follows: "The Committee's findings suggest that following a dietary pattern that reduces snacking and emphasizes meals, both primarily comprised of foods and beverages that contribute to nutrient and food group recommendations, can help align eating patterns with dietary guideline recommendations." While the DGAC recognized that these eating occasions (snacks) can contribute positive nutrients, they note that snack choices are often high calorie or "low nutrient foods" that don't help individuals meet dietary recommendations. Later on, they recommend choosing more nutrient-dense snack options like substituting nuts for chips.

The DGAC suggestions regarding snack consumption do not reflect the topics/questions examined by the Frequency of Eating Subcommittee as we understand. Specifically, there were no definitive conclusions from the Nutrition Evidence Systematic Review (NESR) systematic reviews on the relationship between frequency of eating and health. Accordingly, the DGAC relied on perspectives from a broader working group that reviewed data across all DGA related issues, including frequency of eating. The DGAC did note more work needs to be done in this area, including the standardization of terms used in frequency of eating research.

Next Steps

Now that the DGAC's report and recommendations have been sent to USDA/HHS, SNAC has the opportunity to engage the Agencies as they write the final policy document. We plan to build upon our written comments previously presented to the DGAC over the last year, seeking input from the Nutrition Working Group to develop a strategy, including additional oral and written comments due August 11 and August 13, reiterating research on the benefits of snacking in meeting nutrient recommendations. USDA/HHS is expected to finalize the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in late 2020.

We look forward to reviewing this information on the upcoming Nutrition Working Group call this week.

Kind Regards,
Jessica

Top Line Take Aways from DGAC Report

Overall, the Committee's final recommendations, outside of those suggestions related to snacking, are relatively status quo and similar to the *2015-2020* edition:

- **Nutrients:** The Committee's conclusions suggest that vitamin D, calcium, dietary fiber, and potassium are underconsumed, and sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars are overconsumed and are of public health concern for all Americans.
- **Dietary Patterns:** The Committee continues to recommend the three dietary patterns outlined in the previous edition (Healthy US-Style, Mediterranean, and Vegetarian), without the addition of any other dietary patterns (e.g., low-carbohydrate)
- **Food Components:** The Committee continues to suggest dietary patterns with food components consisting of higher intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, lean meat and poultry, seafood, nuts and unsaturated vegetable oils and a lower intake of red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and drinks, and refined grains.

New to this edition, this Committee is recommending:

- **Added sugar:** The DGAC is suggesting that the recommended daily intake of added sugars be lowered from the current 10% of daily energy intake to 6% of daily energy intake.
- **B-24 Age group:** While the Committee was unable to come up with a recommended dietary pattern for babies 6-12 months, it did suggest 4-6 month olds should include foods that rich in iron, zinc, and polyunsaturated fats. Exposure to allergens including peanuts and eggs is associated with lower risk of developing food allergies. For kids 12-24 months, the DGAC recommended a diet of meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, dairy, nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables and grains.

Additional Details/Take Aways from Specific DGAC Report Chapters

Frequency of Eating

- The Nutrition Evidence Systematic Review (NESR) review did not yield specific answers to the questions concerning the relationship between frequency of eating and health but did conduct a cross-sectional analysis from the only available sources of nationally representative data to describe the state of eating frequency in the U.S. diet.
- The Committee determined that, on average, Americans self-report 5.7 eating occasions throughout the day with the majority (64 percent) consuming 3 meals per day and 28 percent consuming 2 meals per day. More than 90 percent of Americans also report 2 to 3 snacking occasions per day.
- Americans who reported consuming an average of 3 meals per day had a higher diet quality compared to those consuming 2 meals per day. This was attributable to relatively larger intakes of vegetables, greens and beans, fruit, whole grains, and dairy and smaller intakes of foods with added sugars and sodium in the 3 meal per day pattern.
- Nearly one-fourth (22 percent to 23 percent) of energy consumed by Americans is provided by snacks. Although these eating occasions can contribute to meeting nutrient and food group recommendations (e.g., fruits, dairy), they also can include disproportionately large amounts of high-energy, low-nutrient foods and/or beverages that do not contribute substantively to meeting dietary recommendations.
- The Committee's findings suggest that following a dietary pattern that reduces snacking and emphasizes meals, both primarily comprised of foods and beverages that

contribute to nutrient and food group recommendations, can help align eating patterns with dietary guideline recommendations.

- In the future, the DGAC should:
  - Standardize terms used in frequency of eating research
  - Collect and report all ingestive events occurring within a 24-hour period over multiple days and time periods.
  - Report water intake as an eating occasion in research on frequency of eating.
  - Conduct an RCT on the relationship between frequency of eating and health.
  - Examine the timing of eating occasions and health.
  - Continue to address questions on frequency of eating and health.

Dietary Fats and Seafood

- Evidence to differentiate among sources of carbohydrate (e.g., sugars, refined vs complex) and their impact on blood lipids and CVD outcomes remains inadequate to draw clear conclusions
- The Committee recommends that dietary cholesterol and saturated fat intake be as low as possible within a healthy dietary pattern, and that saturated fat intake be limited to less than 10% of total energy intake.

Added Sugar

- Nearly 70 percent of added sugars intake comes from 5 What We Eat In America (WWEIA), National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) food categories: sweetened beverages, desserts and sweet snacks, coffee and tea (with their additions), candy and sugars, and breakfast cereals and bars.

USDA Food Patterns for Individuals 2 Years and Older

- Most Americans would benefit from shifting current food choices to healthy, nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups. Some shifts that are needed are minor—primarily requiring a different type of food choice or food preparation.
- For example, **choosing a more nutrient-dense snack option of nuts or seeds rather than potato chips or pretzels** would provide similar amounts of energy based on serving size, but would help to increase intake of a broad range of nutrients.