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Review of WIC Food Packages

National WIC Association Leadership Meeting

March 1, 2016

Background: The Role of IOM

The IOM serves as adviser to the nation
to improve health.

- Unbiased, authoritative advice
- Evidence-based recommendations
- Committees composed to avoid conflicts of interest
- Committee works pro bono (volunteers)
- Neutral venue for open dialogue and discussion

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Activities include...

- Consensus Committee Studies
- Workshops
- Forums/Roundtables
- Expert Meetings
- Perspectives



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How IOM studies fit into the regulatory process

- A consensus committee weighs the evidence on a policy question and issues a report with recommendations
- Committees make recommendations in an advisory capacity only
- Study sponsors decide whether or not to implement recommendations

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The Study Process



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Opportunities for Input

- Consensus Reports:
 - Up front work to define task with sponsor
 - Comment on committee
 - Public forums
 - Public workshops
 - Other comments on web

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FACA: The Federal Advisory Committee Act

- FACA governs the activities of any committee established to advise the federal government.
- IOM is subject only to Section 15:
 - Interactions between study Sponsors and the National Academies
 - Ensures public release of certain information
 - Ensures the confidentiality of the committee's discussions

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The Task (Abbreviated)

An *ad hoc* expert committee will undertake a 2-phase comprehensive examination of the United States Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food packages, that is, the foods provided as supplements to the diet by the program, specific for the age and physiological condition of the participant. The committee will review and assess the nutritional status and food and nutritional needs of the WIC-eligible population; provide specific scientifically-based recommendations based on its review and grounded in the most recently-available science; and ensure that recommendations for revising the WIC food packages are consistent with the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, address the health and cultural needs of the WIC participant population, and operate efficiently and can be effectively administered across the geographic scope of the program (national plus some US territories). The goal is development of well-conceived, practical, and economical recommendations that reflect current nutritional science, recommend changes in the availability of key food groups as appropriate, and allow the program to effectively meet the nutritional and cultural needs of the WIC population.

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Evidence Sources

- Workshop input
- Literature review
- Report review
- Data analyses (NHANES, FoodAPS)
- Public comments
- Site visits and shopping

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Three Deliverables

- Letter Report on White Potatoes
 - February, 2015
- Phase I Interim Report
 - November, 2015
- Final Report
 - 12 months following release of the 2015 DGA

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Phase I Conclusions

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Conclusions

- Allow white potatoes as a WIC-eligible vegetable
- WIC participation has declined recently
- In general, the food packages seem to be broadly culturally suitable
- In the 2005-08 NHANES data, both women and children 2 to <5 years old had inadequate intakes of several nutrients; these are:
 - Possibly linked to below-recommended food intakes
 - Could potentially be addressed with changes to the food package

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Conclusions (cont.)

- Also in the 2005-08 NHANES data, both women and children 2 to <5 years old had excessive intakes of several nutrients
- The committee is unlikely to be able to compare food intakes of women before the 2009 food package changes to intakes since then
 - The 2011-12 NHANES sample is too small for this

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Conclusions (cont.)

- The committee will re-evaluate identified nutrient gaps in phase II because
 - Data from 2005-08 are not sufficiently current as they don't reflect recent, important changes in the food packages
 - The WIC “identifier” for the 2011-12 NHANES data had not been released in time for these analyses

Conclusions (cont.)

- With promotion and support, breastfeeding behaviors have improved gradually among WIC participants
 - The 2009 changes to the WIC food packages were associated with limited positive changes in breastfeeding behaviors
 - It may be possible to align the revised food packages to provide additional support for breastfeeding women

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Conclusions (cont.)

- Current WIC food packages provide adequate options for participants with most major food allergies, celiac disease, and food intolerances
 - Inclusion of substitutions for eggs and fish in the revised food packages may be warranted
- Food manufacturers and vendors were able to adapt to the 2009 changes in the food packages
 - Their needs will be considered in the revised food packages

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Next Steps

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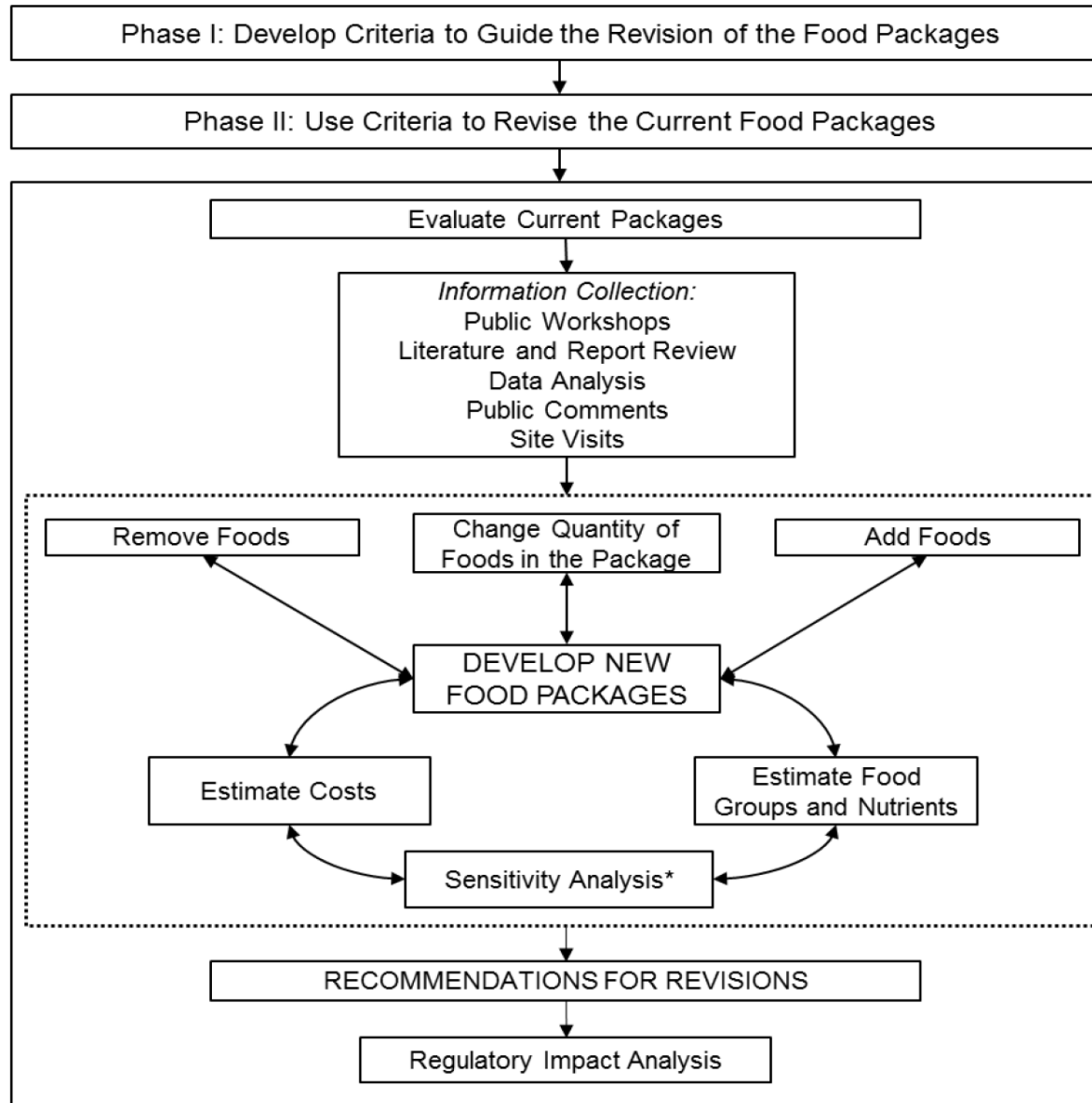
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Proposed Criteria

1. The package contributes to reduction of the prevalence of inadequate nutrient intakes and of excessive nutrient intakes.
2. The package contributes to an overall dietary pattern that is consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* for individuals 2 years of age and older.
3. The package contributes to an overall diet that is consistent with established dietary recommendations for infants and children less than 2 years of age, including encouragement of and support for breastfeeding.
4. The foods in the package are available in forms and amounts suitable for low-income persons who may have limited transportation options, storage, and cooking facilities.
5. The foods in the package are readily acceptable, commonly consumed, are widely available, take into account cultural food preferences, and provide incentives for families to participate in the WIC program.
6. The foods will be proposed giving consideration to the impact of changes in the package on vendors and WIC agencies.

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Process for Revising the WIC Food Packages



Upcoming Public Meetings

Irvine, CA

March 31, 2016 – Public Workshop

April 1, 2016 – Public Comments

Washington, DC

June 29, 2016 – Public Workshop & Comments

Comment submission: <http://goo.gl/D8vY20>

Or here: WICFoodPackages@nas.edu

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