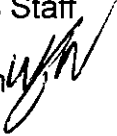


COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Aging

DATE: May 23, 2007

TO: AAA Directors
Attn: Nutrition Services Staff

FROM: William Johnston-Walsh 
Deputy Secretary

SUBJECT: **Inspection and Licensure of Nutrition Services Program Sites at Senior Community Centers and Satellite Centers**

The purpose of this communication is to remind you that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has notified the Department of Aging that senior community centers and satellite centers are "facilities open to the public at large with an age restriction." This communication also provides clarification on the previous memo as well as updated information regarding licensing fees and the definition of a meal preparation site. Based on this interpretation, senior center/satellite center meal preparation sites meet the legal definition of a public eating and drinking place. Center/satellites, therefore, are to be inspected and licensed by the Department of Agriculture or local health officials having jurisdiction. The inspection program provides licenses/registration and inspection of retail food facilities, which serve food or drink to customers under Act 369, the Public Eating and Drinking Places Law (revised April 1, 2005) and to retail food establishments selling food or drink directly to the consumer under Act 70, the Food Act (revised February 22, 2005). All retail food facilities are regulated through Chapter 46, Food Code. These regulations can be found on the Department of Agriculture's web site at www.agriculture.state.pa.us in the "Legal Library."

What this means for the network: All senior center/satellite meal preparation sites are to be inspected and licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, or the local health officials having jurisdiction. The following provides clarification:

A meal preparation site is one where food is being prepared or cooked on site and/or where food that has been prepared off site is being held in hot or cold holding containers/units for later serving. For example, food is delivered to a Senior Center at 10:30 a.m. in hot/cold holding containers or units but will not be served until noon.

Centers/satellites that are strictly serving food that is prepared off site and individually plated and then sent to the center for meal time are not considered meal preparation sites and do not need to be inspected and licensed. An example is a center in which food arrives at 11:50 a.m. already individually plated and then served for lunch.

The Department of Agriculture, or the local health officials having jurisdiction, will inspect currently licensed senior center/satellite meal preparation sites at least yearly. The license fee from the Department of Agriculture is \$82 and this is an annual fee. If the senior center/satellite meal preparation site is licensed by the local County or Health Department the fee will vary. Senior center/satellite meal preparation sites which are currently unlicensed will be inspected as applicable, depending on workloads of local sanitarians/local health officials and as time permits (i.e. centers/satellites are not being actively sought for inspections, but if a sanitarian/local official is aware of one or is informed about one, they will inspect and license it). At this time, no mandated inspection schedule has been established for licensing of currently unlicensed meal preparation sites.

Full cooperation is to be given to the staff of the Department of Agriculture or local health officials having jurisdiction with respect to these inspections. AAAs are encouraged to communicate with the appropriate entity to request inspections for licensure of their meal preparation sites. The list of Department of Agriculture's Regional Offices is enclosed with this memo. Aside from complying with the law, an inspection and licensure is another way to emphasize the importance of food safety and to ensure that the physical locations where meals are served are as safe as possible.

Additional questions were raised with the Department of Agriculture about the necessity of senior center personnel to have a Department of Agriculture Food Employee Certification as a provision of the statute that requires certain food establishments to employ at least one certified supervisory employee per establishment. The Department of Agriculture has decided that entities such as 501(c)3 organizations as well as those operated by state, county or local government agencies, as not-for-profit organizations are exempt from this requirement. Although this exempts senior center personnel from acquiring certification for the Department of Agriculture, all personnel involved in nutrition services are STRONGLY encouraged to complete a food safety training program, such as the ServSafe Essentials program offered by the Department of Aging.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky Fortenbaugh at (717) 783-6210 or rfortenbau@state.pa.us. Thank you.

Enclosure

cc: Sheri Morris
Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services