Food Safety, Food Security, and the Public Health Inspector

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CIPHI New Brunswick | September 11, 2014
The NCCEH

Six National Collaborating Centres

NCC Aboriginal Health  NCC Determinants of Health  NCC Environmental Health
NCC Healthy Public Policy  NCC Infectious Diseases  NCC Methods & Tools

Synthesize, translate & exchange knowledge

Identify gaps in knowledge

Build capacity through networks

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What We Do

Focus:
- Health risks associated with the physical environment (natural & built)
- Support evidence-based interventions to mitigate those risks

Target Audience:
- PHIs, MHOs, and other EH professionals
NCCEH Resources

- Evidence reviews, practice scenarios
- Workshops, presentations
- Health agency projects, legislation, continuing education

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Objectives

• Examine intersections between food safety and food security
• How does food security relate to PHIs?
• Share experiences from different perspectives
• Identify best practices, needs and gaps
What is food security ... and what does it have to do with public health?
Food security:
All people have access to sufficient, safe, appropriate, nutritious food.

Community food security:
Self-reliant, sustainable communities in which all people have access to quality, affordable food.
Food security includes safety

FAO/WHO (World Food Summit 1996)
- “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”
- Availability, access, utilization, stability

Community Food Security/BC Public Health Core Programs
- “situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows 2003)

AAAASS
- Accessible, adequate, appropriate, affordable, available, safe, sustainable
8.3%
10.1%
Food security

Individual/Household
- Public health
- Social services
- Non-profits

Community
- Public health
- EHO/PHI
- Local government
- Non-profits

National
- Federal agencies
- NGOs

Global
- UN, FAO, WHO
- Nations
- INGOs
Food safety and food security

Public health

FOOD SECURITY

- safe
- nutritious
- dignified access
- accessible
- local/sustainable

FOOD SAFETY
Food safety/security continuum

- Food Security Continuum
  - Short-term/Emergency
    - e.g., Enforcement
  - Capacity Building Initiatives
    - e.g., Progressive enforcement
  - Transforming the food system
    - e.g., Culture of food safety

Minimize Risk of Foodborne Illness

Adapted from PHSA
Public health practice is changing

Food security within public health mandates
Determinants of health

“...many social conditions that interact to influence our health and well-being, the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age...”

Health inequities

“...health differences between population groups, defined in social, economic, demographic or geographic terms...”

Barriers to compliance that need to be addressed by PH

Systematic, avoidable, and unjust (NCCDH)
EH is changing

- Discretionary use of enforcement
- Education and health promotion vs. enforcement tools
Food security interventions

• New territory for inspection
• Changing landscape
• Different paradigms and priorities
• Real food safety risks
• Barriers
  – Financial
  – Infrastructure
  – Food safety knowledge
  – Scale
Food security events

- Farmers’ markets
- Soup kitchens
- Food banks
- Good food box
- Temporary markets
- Farm to table
- Farm to school
- Community gardens
- School gardens
- Traditional food
- Daycares
What does this mean for the food industry?

- Small scale operations
- Relationship-based exchange
- Fewer resources available
- Small size offers opportunities to promote change and educate re food safety
- Increased awareness of food = opportunity to increase awareness around food safety
• What kind of food security events have you encountered?
• What are the main food safety issues?
• How have you responded?
FOOD SAFETY FOR FOOD SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS
Food security organizations

Challenges

- Opportunity
  - Access to infrastructure
  - Level of commitment
  - Financial restrictions

- Knowledge
  - Access to training
  - Quality of training

- Oversight
  - Lack of guidelines & inspection
  - New events/initiatives
Food security organizations

Successes

• Positive relationships with inspectors
• Early and open communication
• Shared vision
  – Access to safe, healthy food
PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION AT FOOD SECURITY EVENTS
Food Safety

• Need for sector specific guidelines
• Community needs
  – Access to appropriate infrastructure
  – Knowledge levels
• New initiatives
  – Chemical hazards in garden soil
  – Farm to school

• Relationships
• Early intervention
• Clear requirements
Challenges to food safety

- Access to licensed kitchen facilities
- Volunteer/non-professional food handlers
- Access to quality food safety training
- Use of approved sources of food
- New food products and processes
- Finding out about new things happening
- Different priorities/mission
Best practices for food protection

- Good relationships
- Early involvement
- Consistent messages from all parties
- Collaboration
- Education and information
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Clear guidance for all parties
Guidelines

http://ncceh.ca/en/eh_organization/guidelines/food
Industry food donor guidelines (BC)

Donors
- Farmers
- Processors
- Retailers
- Food service
- Distributors

Recipients
- Food banks
- Meal programs
- Social enterprises

Food safety
Food security
Nutrition
Environment
What NCCEH has learned

Best practices

• Collaboration
  – Within PH
  – Across sectors and jurisdictions
• Education
  – PHIs, PH professionals
  – Consumers, food handlers
• Early intervention
• Creativity and flexibility
• Focus on outcomes
• Remember shared goals

Needs and gaps

• How to identify new initiatives early on
• Public education
• Health promotion/education takes time
• Lack of evidence-based guidance
• Need networking opportunities
Options for moving forward

‘Blue Sky’

What is needed?

Realistic

Knowledge

Resources

Best practices

Networks

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Thank You

Questions?
Comments?

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Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada
A new program plans to support local farmers while providing fresh, healthy food to elementary school kids. Fresh fruits and vegetable snacks will be prepared in the schools.

Most elementary schools, some in lower income neighbourhoods where kids come to school hungry, do not have approved kitchen facilities for washing and cutting produce or for sanitizing dishes and equipment.
Scenario: Mobile food markets

A community development organization wants to start a mobile farm market to sell local produce at low cost to residents of an inner city neighbourhood that has no grocery store.

Residents now rely on packaged foods from the convenience store.

The mobile market has no infrastructure for hand washing, cold storage, etc.