South Dakota Department of Health

DIVISION OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Community Health Services
Disease Prevention
Family Health
Health Promotion
State Epidemiologist

TO: School Nurses and Health & Physical Education Teachers
FROM: SD Departments of Health and Education
DATE: September 4, 2007
RE: School Height and Weight Data Collection and Equipment Distribution

Dear School Nurses and Health and Physical Education Teachers:

In an effort to address the obesity epidemic in South Dakota, the Department of Health (DOH) along with the Department of Education (DOE) will partner with schools to collect current height and weight data on school age children. In addition, we have resources to assist with data collection and obesity prevention promotion activities. Please consider working with us to address this issue.

School Height and Weight Data: This school year marks our 10th year collecting heights and weights of children 5-18 years of age. The voluntary program has been underway since 1998 as an effort to track childhood obesity in South Dakota. It serves as a basis to develop state and local strategies and is a way for participating schools to quantify the problem of childhood obesity.

To save school staff time, heights and weights can be entered on the Infinite Campus system. We strongly encourage you to use this convenient method as it saves both school and state agency staff time. If you do not have access to this data collection system, please contact your Infinite Campus administrator or principal to receive permissions to enter data and extract reports. Easy to follow instructions for using the Infinite Campus system can be found at: http://doh.sd.gov/SchoolWeight/. This web site also has instructions for taking accurate measurements and for maintaining confidentiality as well as a list of considerations for schools that choose to send data to parents.

If your school does not use Infinite Campus for other school records, please submit the height and weight data in an Excel spreadsheet following the instructions on the web site listed above. The above website also has a Word file if other options do not work. Handwritten data will continue to be accepted.

Data for the 2007-2008 school year will be accepted at anytime during this school year but must be submitted no later than June 16, 2008, for inclusion in analysis. Enclosed is a copy of the summary brochure for the 2005-2006 school year.

Free Measuring Equipment: The DOH is again accepting applications for equipment (wall-mounted measuring board and balance beam scale) if needed for your school to participate in the School Height and Weight Data project. A short application form is included with this letter. Applications are due by September 28, 2007, either by regular mail or electronic mail.

If you have questions about the school data or the measuring equipment, please contact Kristin at 605/734-4551 or Kristin.Biskeborn@state.sd.us. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Kristin Biskeborn

Kristin Biskeborn, MPH, RD, LN
DOH State Nutritionist

Kari Senger

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DOE CSHP Director

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cc: Superintendents
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