



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

Office of the
Director

March 3, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: Linda M. Springer,
Director

SUBJECT: *HealthierFeds*: Promoting Wellness Among Federal Employees
National Nutrition Month®, March 2006

Nutrition is one of the four pillars of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) *HealthierFeds* initiative and is widely accepted to have significant impact on health and wellbeing. Full-time Federal employees are likely to spend almost half of their waking hours at work. As a result, many are making choices about much of the food they eat based on what is easily available at or near the workplace.

Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that thirty percent of U.S. adults age twenty and older, are obese. Poor nutrition choices are a part of this dangerous trend. Overweight and obesity increase the risk of many diseases, including high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, sleep apnea, heart disease, and some cancers. All of these are costly in human terms, as well as for our economy and health system.

National Nutrition Month®, sponsored by the American Dietetic Association, provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of nutritional choices at Federal workplaces. In addition to activities that disseminate information to employees, Federal agencies can use this health observance to examine workplace nutrition more generally and to begin to reduce or eliminate barriers that prevent employees from making the best choices.

For example, many Federal agencies provide food services to employees. From full-service cafeterias to event catering to vending machines, making healthy alternatives easily available can have a real impact. We can also encourage other positive nutrition behaviors around less formal food venues, such as staff meetings, office parties, and bake sales.

When best practices and sound, reliable resources are used, workplaces can provide employees important opportunities to make healthy living choices each and every day. We encourage agencies to explore the resources listed below and integrate workplace nutrition into a robust employee health and wellness program. The *HealthierFeds* initiative can provide support and assistance. For further information, contact staff members at Healthierfeds@opm.gov. Other resources worth exploring are: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Overweight and Obesity Website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/index.htm> or The American Dietetic Association's Knowledge Center at eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/nutrition.html.

CON 131-64-4
September 1993