

# 2019-2020 Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel

## Yearend Report

### Purpose

The Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel (NYAP) will provide input and feedback on nutrition resources, messages and approaches that target youth ages 15-19 years, and are aimed at improving their nutritional knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

### Goal

Alberta Health Services (AHS) School Nutrition Working Group (SNWG) understands and addresses the nutrition-related topics that are of personal importance to youth in Alberta.

### Activities and Discussions

Meeting Date	Activities	Discussions
Sept 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of 2017-2018 &amp; 2018-19 YAC activities.</li> <li>• Reviewed member expectations and ground rules.</li> <li>• Discussed the role of a Registered Dietitian.</li> </ul>	
October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in a focus group with SNWG's Healthy Relationship with Food Project Group.</li> <li>• Introduced Healthy Messages for Youth Pilot Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings from the focus group will help guide the work of the Healthy Relationship with Food Project Group.</li> </ul>
November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed project steps 1 &amp; 2.</li> <li>• Reviewed Canada's Food Guide and provided feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members shared the progress on their project for steps 1 (research communication channels in school) and 2 (choose a communication channel to effectively reach students).</li> <li>• Feedback on Canada's Food Guide:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What they liked:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simple</li> <li>○ Format and visuals</li> <li>○ Incorporation of the importance</li> <li>○ Added psychological aspect</li> <li>○ More info regarding alternate proteins</li> <li>○ Clickable links</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>What they didn't like:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Too simple – can compromise important information</li> <li>○ Does not show specific nutrition info</li> <li>○ Inconvenient</li> <li>○ Does not give measurements</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>How it is usable for youth:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accessible – online give better access for</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>youth               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paper copy should be made available</li> <li>○ Not overly useful for youth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed project steps 3 to 5.</li> <li>• Reviewed Alberta's 2019 Nutrition Report Card.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members shared the progress on their project for steps 3 (choose a nutrition topic relevant to youth), 4 (create a nutrition message), and 5 (design and format the nutrition message).</li> <li>• NYAP's work has been noted in Alberta's 2019 Nutrition Report Card under discussions of food skills education and body image.</li> </ul>
January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No meeting held this month due to exams.</li> </ul>	
February 04, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed project steps 6 to 7.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members shared the progress on their project for steps 6 (communicate your message) and 7 (collect feedback from peers on the message).</li> </ul>
February 18, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed project steps 6 to 7.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members shared the progress on their project for steps 6 (communicate your message) and 7 (collect feedback from peers on the message).</li> </ul>
March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed project step 8.</li> <li>• Introduced work time tracking sheet.</li> <li>• Introduced Tell Your Own Story.</li> <li>• Introduced yearend report infographic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members shared the progress on their project for step 8 (reflect on the project process).</li> <li>• The results of the project is summarized in <a href="#">Healthy Messages for Youth Pilot Summary Report 2019-2020</a>.</li> </ul>
April 07 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked on yearend report infographic as a group.</li> </ul>	
April 21 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members presented the group yearend report.</li> <li>• Members shared their own story.</li> <li>• Discussed recommendations for improvement.</li> </ul>	
May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed membership for 2020-2021 NYAP.</li> <li>• Thanked all members for participating and provided a letter of recommendation.</li> </ul>	

### Outcomes

#### Process

Seven high school students from four AHS zones (North, Edmonton, Calgary, and South) participated in the NYAP for 2019/20. Two students were in grade 10 and five students were in grade 11. Meetings were held monthly and online via Skype from September 2019 to May 2020. No meeting was held in January due to exams. Instead, two meetings were held in February. Also, a separate working meeting was held in April for members to work on their yearend report. A total of ten, 1.5 hour meetings were held with an average attendance of 5 members at each meeting.

#### Member knowledge and skills

Feedback from members indicated that they gained knowledge about health and nutrition, the importance of nutrition-related work, and the challenges that come with this work. They also stated that they gained skills in interpersonal communication, collaboration, public speaking, research, and leadership.

- “NYAP helped me grow my knowledge of nutrition and health, and gave me a platform to share what I learned with others!”
- “I have gained insight into the significance of nutrition-related work. I also have a deeper understanding of how important it is to pay attention to dietary and nutritional needs in your personal life.”
- “I now feel confident to lead discussions on the topic of healthy nutrition habits for youth.”
- “I now have a greater understanding of the challenges associated with advocating for nutrition-related issues.”
- “Through NYAP I have gained communication skills and research skills”
- “The research I did for my project helped me to become more knowledgeable on the topic of altering bad eating habits and it also helped me find many different recipes for future meals.”
- “Being a part of this panel has allowed me to fine-tune many important skills such as collaboration and interpersonal communication.”

#### Member wellbeing, confidence and sense of self-worth

Responses from youth members indicated that NYAP was a valuable experience to become more knowledgeable and reflective on their own dietary habits. Participation in the committee allowed them to be more responsible which increased their motivation and ability to impact others.

- “NYAP has taught me to embrace responsibility and be accountable for my lifestyle and health.”

- “I felt delighted to be able to do something that could potentially impact people in my school and their lifestyle.”
- “Being passionate about healthy diets, and intricate bodily balances, I am glad for the opportunity to be an NYAP member.”
- “I would recommend it to anyone who wants to benefit their community.”
- “This motivated me to speak with staff and students on how we can alter our bad eating habits.”
- “Our discussions challenged me to analyze the reasons behind my personal nutritional decisions and have now motivated me to continue promoting important nutritional information for leading healthy lifestyles.”
- “I was not only able to connect with other youth, but also meet inspiring adult mentors from Alberta Health Services.”

### Impact for Nutrition Services

The NYAP provides an ongoing forum for the SNWG to learn from Alberta youth about topics that are important to them. Through consultation with committee members and their efforts to engage their peers, we have identified nutrition topics relevant to youth as well as preferred communication channels and formats that can be used with youth in school settings. In addition, the NYAP continues to provide feedback on nutrition products developed by Nutrition Services to ensure we provide messages, tools and resources that are relevant to this population.

### Successes

With the fourth year of the NYAP (end in May 2020) and the fifth year (2020/21) underway, the NYAP has exemplified the following:

- Strong member engagement and participation
- Leadership skills in actively spearheading campaigns to bring awareness to healthy eating in their schools
- Ability to work collaboratively with different parties to achieve their goals and elicit feedback
- Creativity, resiliency, and problem-solving skills when encountering challenges
- Continued interest in health, healthy eating, and promoting this among their peers

### Points to consider

#### Recommendations from members

- Add more educational content or “curriculum” to this program, which can have an impact on the lives of both the participating youth and the peer groups. For example, career

related content such as “a day in the life of a Dietitian” or content related to making healthy choices as individuals.

- Explore many topics that are related to nutrition, such as time management, social media, and financial circumstances more in depth at the beginning of the term through discussion or research, so the members are better oriented into what ideas/information most importantly need to be spread through projects.
- NYAP could focus on creating more promotional content and resources, such as a short video, that could also be sent out to the schools at the end of the year as a final “wrap up” message from NYAP outlining what we want students to take away.
- Include more activities outside of the projects like focus groups in order to learn more about nutrition.

### Recommendations from the planning team

Continue to:

- Strive towards broad and diverse gender, geography, community size and indigenous youth representation from all AHS zones.
- Use Zoom for NYAP online meetings to minimize technical difficulties for the youth.
- Continue to encourage equal input from all members.
- Encourage members to attend all meetings. The 2019-20 attendance average for the meeting was 5/7 members.
- Develop a comprehensive outline of year’s activities including potential projects, resources to review, etc. Use student recommendations to inform activities for 2020-21 school year and identify activities and timelines to allow completion.
- Plan activities and meetings as far in advance as possible with youth input to avoid meeting conflicts.

### Recommended next steps

- Continue to expand our recruitment activities for Alberta-wide representation, including Indigenous youth.
- Formally communicate member expectations and ground rules in the beginning of the year to encourage members to attend all meetings and to complete all tasks.
- Provide clear direction to NYAP members on expectation of tasks or projects. Limit the scope so that it is smaller, manageable, and more defined for members.
- Encourage verbal discussion by planning more ice breaker activities, setting parameters for use of the written message function, asking each member for comments, etc.
- Include more activities to encourage members to increase their knowledge in nutrition and healthy eating.