

A Review of:

2020/2021 Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel Year End Report



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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 nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Goal:

Alberta Health Services (AHS) Child & Youth Target Population Working Group (C&Y TP WG) understands and addresses the nutrition-related topics that are of personal importance to youth in Alberta.

Activities and Discussions:

Meeting Dates:	Activities	Discussions:	Applicability/Considerations:
September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed NYAP activities from previous years. Reviewed member expectations and ground rules. 		
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed the impact of COVID-19 on nutrition in youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarized in Oct 19th discussion document: COVID-19 and Nutrition* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings were shared with the C&Y TP WG to help inform work. Nutrition myths and education needs brought up during the discussion were addressed in “Taking a Bite Out of Nutrition Myths” education session at the November meeting

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Meeting Dates:	Activities	Discussions:	Applicability/Considerations:
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in “Taking a Bite Out of Nutrition Myths” education session. Prioritized discussion topics for the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed nutrition myths around supplements/vitamins, diets, drinks, fats, and immune system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good feedback received from members. Main takeaways identified by members included learning about healthy fats and being mindful of fast food and caffeine intake.
December 2020	Group discussion on ways teachers can role model for youth.	Meeting recording saved. *	Findings will help guide the work of the Healthy Relationship with Food for Mind and Body Priority Initiative Working Group.

Meeting Dates:	Activities	Discussions:	Applicability/Considerations:
January 2021	No meeting held this month due to exams.		
February 2021	Group discussion on how to develop interactive Canada’s Food Guide education activities for teachers to do in class.	Summarized on February 8 th discussion document: Canada’s Food Guide. *	Findings will help guide the work of the C&Y TP WG in developing interactive Canada’s Food Guide education activities.

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Meeting Dates:	Activities	Discussions:	Applicability/Considerations:
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion on communication strategies targeting youth. Introduced Tell Your Own Story. Introduced year-end report infographic. 	Summarized in Mar 15 th discussion document: Communication Strategies.	Findings will help guide the work of the C&Y TP WG in developing communication plan targeting youth.
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion on how to support youth to build food skills. Discussed recommendations for improvement for NYAP. 	Summarized in Apr 19 th Discussion: discussion document: Food Skills.	Findings will help guide the work of the C&Y TP WG in developing plans to support food skills development in youth.
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized group year-end infographic. Thanked all members for participating and provided a letter of recommendation. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For further information on discussion summaries or recordings contact: publichealthnutrition@ahs.ca 			

Outcomes:

Process:

Seven high school students from all five AHS zones (North, Edmonton, Central, Calgary, and South) participated in the NYAP in 2020/21. Two students were in grade 11 and five students were in grade 12. Meetings were held monthly and online via Zoom from September 2020 to May 2021. No meeting was held in January due to exams. A total of eight, 1.5-hour meetings were held with an average attendance of 6 members at each meeting.

Member Knowledge and Skills:

Feedback from members indicated that they gained knowledge about nutrition, food skills, and aspects of healthy relationship with food. They also stated that they gained skills as a student in communication, public speaking, research, and professionalism which will guide their own nutrition journey and also help promote nutrition among youth in their community.

- “I enjoyed having the opportunity to learn more about nutrition.”
- “I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of something so amazing and have learned so much such as food skills and professional skills like public speaking.”
- “Partaking in such an endeavor has boosted my skills as a student.”
- “Communication skills, research skills, and my overall professional development was overseen during this program, and I am incredibly grateful for the chance to be a part of this group!”
- “The panel has given an opportunity for me to put my passion for health and youth into action, all while improving essential skills such as communication and research skills.”
- “The knowledge and experiences I have gained allowed me to change my own relationship with the topic of nutrition, as well as have a real impact on how nutrition is being promoted towards those in my age group.”
- The information and abilities I have gained as part of NYAP will not only guide me in my own nutrition journey but will also help promote nutrition in my community.”

Member Wellbeing, Confidence, and Sense of Self-Worth:

Responses from youth members indicated that NYAP was a positive experience where they felt their voice was heard and opinions were valued. Participation in the panel helped members to feel understood, accepted, and to become more reflective on their own dietary habits to enhance both their mental and physical wellbeing.

- “I felt like my thoughts and opinions were listened to and valued.”
- “I really appreciated that my feedback and input was valued whether it was towards the Canadian Food Guide or how the program itself was run.”
- “Overall, NYAP was an amazing opportunity filled with learning and acceptance, and I am glad I was able to be a part of this group.”
- “I felt my voice was heard and my opinion was valued. My time on NYAP was filled with learning, and connection building, and I am thankful I got to be part of such a group.”
- “The panel’s dietitians have been a great source of positivity and advice for the members when discussing new information and going above and beyond to ensure we understand.”
- “With the new knowledge I have gained, in aspects of healthy relationships with food, food skills and the uncertainty of social media, I often catch myself applying them in my daily life, enhancing both my mental and physical wellbeing.”

Impact for Nutrition Services:

The NYAP provides an ongoing forum for the Child & Youth Target Population Working Group to learn from Alberta youth about topics that are important to them and ways we can better reach youth to improve our health promotion efforts. Through consultation with panel members and their efforts to engage their peers, we have gained insights which will help guide working group activities in the future such as developing interactive Canada's Food Guide education activities, supporting youth to build food skills, and exploring ways teachers can role model for youth. 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 fifth year of the NYAP (end in May 2021) and the sixth year (2021/22) underway, the NYAP has exemplified the following:

- Strong member engagement and participation.
- 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 Student Members:

- Include more nutrition education and the ways we can share them with our peers.
- Continue to have discussions on topics that are relevant, relatable and enjoyable for youth.
- Cover topics such as sport nutrition, nutrition and mental health, and optimal nutrition for different age groups to stay healthy through adulthood.
- Include an opportunity to conduct hands-on activities within NYAP, school, or in our community interacting with other youths.
- Have more opportunities to work collectively on projects to create one big campaign e.g., NYAP's own social media
- Use whiteboard and annotate function more in Zoom to brainstorm ideas.

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 as it has worked well for members.
- Continue to encourage equal input from all members.
- Encourage members to attend all meetings. The 2020-21 attendance average for the meeting was 6/7 members.
- Develop a comprehensive outline of year's activities, including discussion topics, potential projects, resources to review, etc. Use student recommendations to inform activities for 2021-22 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.
- Include a combination of education components, discussions, and a small mini project to take back to school.
- Make more interactive use of the Zoom features.
- Start planning in the summer for the next year.

Recommended next steps.

- Continue to expand our recruitment activities for Alberta-wide representation, including Indigenous youth.
- 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.