

# A Review of:

## 2021/2022 Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel Year End Report



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### Purpose:

The Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel (NYAP) is an initiative set in motion by Alberta Health Services to give passionate youth the opportunity to make their voices heard about nutrition and healthy lifestyles for all youth in Alberta. The NYAP provides 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 behaviors. Youth from all over Alberta are encouraged to give their input and feedback on provincial resources meant to promote healthy nutrition, as well as share their ideas for the future. Through their diverse and unique viewpoints, NYAP can give provide Nutrition Services accurate ways to truly get through to youth about nutrition across the province.

### Goal:

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

### Activities and Discussions:

<b>Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Discussions:</b>	<b>Applicability/Considerations:</b>
<b>October 2021</b>	Had presented one of the Sport nutrition education sessions with focus group to obtain feedback on the two mockup posters, both titled: "Fueling for Sport Nutrition: Hydration"	What improvements could be made and what was positive about the posters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared youth's input with C&amp;Y WG (sport nutrition)</li> <li>Refined posters based on feedback</li> </ul>
<b>November 2021</b>	Students completed Healthy Eating in Rec Centres (HERS) Module 8 (Sport Nutrition) ahead of time and had a focus group for feedback on 4 AHS infographic sport nutrition posters, including: "Hydration for sport nutrition," "Fueling for sport nutrition", "What to eat before activity" & "What to eat during activity."	<b>Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did you like about it?</li> <li>What did you not like?</li> <li>Do you see this being useful in schools or other sport settings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of evaluation of the 4 AHS posters.</li> <li>Provided second half of the sports nutrition education piece to enhance groups learning on the topic of sport nutrition, as per group request</li> <li>Shared youth's input with C&amp;Y WG (sport nutrition infographic poster set for continued refinement)</li> </ul>

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<p><b>December 2021</b></p>	<p>Went through the CFG – Health Canada website and resources/past presentations and had discussion. Used visual presentation to explain differences between homemade and store-bought foods.</p>	<p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the CFG taught before? What did you like? What did you not like?</li> <li>• How would you teach the CFG to your age group?</li> <li>• In previous classes what helped you to learn the materials?</li> <li>• In person/ in-class methods vs online virtual class?</li> <li>• Group work vs individual projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided an education piece to enhance groups knowledge and exposure on teaching and learning styles.</li> <li>• Educated group regarding the CFG and resources available.</li> <li>• Gained feedback on how to use presentations and what style would be most suitable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>February 2022</b></p>	<p>Reviewed CFG/ trivia game presentation and additional Dairy Farmers of Canada lesson plan as examples and then focus groups to obtain feedback on acceptability of resource for teaching and learning CFG.</p>	<p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What grades would this be suitable for?</li> <li>• Format engaging and interesting?</li> <li>• What did you like about this resource?</li> <li>• What are some changes you would make to improve age appropriateness?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education component of the millionaire game</li> <li>• Quiz portion of the millionaire game.</li> <li>• Shared youth's input with C&amp;Y WG</li> </ul>

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<b>March 2022</b>	Reflected on previous meeting (Millionaire game)	<b>Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the changes we have made, what grades do you think this resource would be appropriate for?</li> <li>Do you think the trivia questions are appropriate for high school students?</li> <li>Are there any additional changes you would make to improve the content or format of this resource?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared youth's input with C&amp;Y WG</li> <li>Edited game based on previous feedback making the trivia questions more difficult and high school age appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>April 2022</b>	Reflected and discussed NYAP in general.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Got participants to highlight education topics they would like to focus on in the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used group input to plan for the next school years' NYAP topics and activities.</li> </ul>

**Outcomes:**

**Process:**

12 high school students from 4 AHS zones (North zone, Central zone, Calgary zone and South zone). 4 participants were in grade 11, 6 participants were from grade 12, and 2 participants were from grade 10. 3 dietetic interns also participated in the group. Meetings were held monthly via ZOOM from September 2021 to March 2022. No meeting was held in January due to exams. A total of 7 1.5-hour meetings were held with an average attendance of 9 participants at each meeting.

## Results and Highlights:

The Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel was able to:

- Participate in multiple education sessions instructed by the dietetic interns, based on topics including sport nutrition for optimal performance. This resulted in the panel gaining a better understanding of both the dietetic career and the science behind food. It also allowed them to address myths against facts, invalidating common misconceptions and increased their nutrition knowledge.
- Utilize experiences to provide feedback on sport nutrition infographics with the goal of developing them to be more appealing to teens in Alberta. The outcome of this was improving our resources to better target the youth demographic for use in various settings: schools, rec centres and minor sports and individual active living pursuits.
- Discuss CFG teaching and learning tools/ lessons and a variety of aspects of nutrition for young adults, including school programs, challenges, and proposed improvements. This allowed the exploration of differences and similarities within the province.
- Attend meetings in a professional setting to enhance communication skills, planning, evaluating, and decision making. These skills were refined all while developing positive experiences within the team. Overall, the skills practiced and fine-tuned in this program will be invaluable both in and out of professional settings.

## Member Knowledge and Skills:

Feedback from members indicated that they gained knowledge about nutrition and health. Additionally, common responses indicated that members felt they gained skills in leadership and communication.

- “I have been able to expand my understanding of nutrition through our many sessions and discourses with interning dietitians, as well as through the HERS module and other modules we may have covered.”
- “NYAP has served as an outlet for my passion about health and nutrition, as well as allowing me to grow as a leader.”
- “Furthermore, I was able to learn and grow my understanding about nutrition, and youth nutrition in particular.”
- “I have gained many valuable communication skills and information that will continue to be useful for me personally as well those around me as I share my knowledge.”
- “All of us were able to greatly expand our knowledge on the topics of health and nutrition.”
- “This group has expanded my knowledge and allowed me to provide input on how to best share the importance of nutrition with youth. Being part of this panel has been a rewarding experience and has helped me to improve some of my own skills, such as communication.”
- “I was able to improve my communication skills while learning more about the field I have been curious about pursuing as a career.”

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

Responses from members indicated that they felt that NYAP was an important platform to ensure their voices were heard. Additionally, they felt that it allowed them to gain confidence when discussing issues, and many members stated they would recommend this group to their peers.

- “I appreciate how the Nutrition Youth Advisory Panel (NYAP) has allowed me to play an active role in shaping how youth learn about nutrition as a teen myself.”
- “I have also been able to apply my unique experiences and personal relationship with health and nutrition, along with my knowledge about youth wants and preferences to improve current materials to better suit youth needs”
- “I have enjoyed being part of NYAP. I met a lot of interesting new people, and it was awesome”
- “Being a part of something impactful such as NYAP is extremely fulfilling and rewarding; I would recommend that other youth who have a passion for nutrition and who would like to contribute to improving youth nutrition in our province take part in NYAP in the future!”
- “I now feel confident in my ability to share that knowledge and educate my peers when it comes to similar issues. Being a member of NYAP has also given me valuable experience, as well as the confidence to handle discussion on various topics in a professional environment.”
- “I have always felt that my opinions were valued and considered. I recommend this opportunity to anyone who is interested in health and nutrition, as well as gaining volunteering experience.”
- “Everyone was very supportive in the group especially when opinions were being given, this made it very comfortable to give my own thoughts”.

### Impact for Nutrition Services:

The NYAP group provides an ongoing forum for the Child and 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 nutrition resources, programs, and potential opportunities where change is suggested, or gaps exist. Through consultation with panel members and their efforts to engage their peers, Nutrition Services gained insights which will help guide working group activities in the future. Additionally, 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. NYAP activities were able to be more targeted and aligned with the C&Y work plan.

## Successes:

With the sixth year of NYAP (end in May 2022) being completed, the success of NYAP has been shown through 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.
- Valuable experience for the youth to gain knowledge on topics, and dietetic interns to help lead, enhance communication skills, and provide volunteer opportunities for youth.

## Points to Consider:

### Recommendations from Student Members:

- Requested more education for Athletes
- Requested to learn more about media, marketing, and the health industry.
- Requested to learn more about the food guide, nutrition labels, and overall myths/facts regarding nutrition.
- Liked the Q & A style of discussion, felt this was a good learning experience. Felt that discussion made it possible for own opinions to be heard and answered.
- Want more explanation of what the youth input will be used for.

### Recommendations and Next Steps from The Planning Team:

- Broader participation and support from other NS work groups that have youth as part of their target demographic.
- Planning earlier for topics/activities for NYAP to cover in the year.
- Increased intern involvement.
- Increase NYAP memberships to 14 to account for absences.
- Explore recruiting 1 more member for the planning group.
- Assess NYAP meeting frequency as needed depending on planned topics/activities for the year.