Improving Nutrition Standards for Meals Away From Home: The ¡Por Vida! Program

Kasey Pape MS, RD, LD
City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
Chronic Disease Prevention Division

Presenter Disclosures
Kasey Pape

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Session Objectives

- Identify strategies to build productive relationships between public health, registered dietitians, and the food industry.
- Describe the process of engaging food service establishments in supporting labeling healthy food choices on menus.
- Describe methods and results of external evaluation and sustainability of program.

Adult Obesity in San Antonio

Source of the data: San Antonio Metropolitan Health District CPPW Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2012

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) IN BEXAR COUNTY

In Adults

- 35% NORMAL WEIGHT
- 65% OVERWEIGHT OR obese
The Healthy Restaurants Coalition

- A partnership of local organizations and individuals interested in promoting healthy food and good nutrition in San Antonio.

- **Initial meetings included**
  - The San Antonio Restaurant Association
  - The San Antonio Dietetic Association
  - Public Health Partners

- The coalition developed a shared goal of partnership and cooperation

- No funding for first year

Different Motivations

- Public Health and Dietetics professionals are interested in reducing obesity through increasing access and consumption of healthy foods.

- Restaurants are interested in attracting business and staying relevant in a changing market while increasing profits.

Por Vida! Program Development

- 8,057 active food establishment permits in San Antonio

- Program created to be culturally relevant to the Bexar County community – 58.7% Hispanic/Latino

- Priority tasks in developing the program
  - Developing nutrition criteria
  - Marketing/logo
  - Restaurant selection/implementation

- Program launched in October 2010 at 7 restaurants with 80 locations

Timeline: Healthy Restaurants Coalition
When you choose “¡Por Vida!”, you make a better choice “For Life.”

A restaurant recognition program that helps adults and children make healthier food choices by identifying menu items that meet nutritional guidelines developed by the Healthy Restaurants Coalition.

The “Rules of Engagement”

- Develop the coalition and program with the restaurant owner in mind.
- Voluntary participation is essential.
- Distinguish between “menu labeling” and creating healthy choices on menus.
- No imposed mandates.
- Provide a seat for restaurants at the table.
- Consider that restaurants want assistance preparing for nationwide menu labeling.

Nutritional Criteria

(Entry + Two Sides)

- ≤ 700 Calories
- ≤ 23g Total Fat
- ≤ 8g Saturated Fat
- ≤ 0.5g Trans-Fat
- ≤ 750mg Sodium
- No Fried Foods

Criteria are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans which suggest a balanced diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy and lean protein. Consume a variety of nutrient dense foods with minimal saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars.
Children's Menu Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Same size as menu serving of fruit</td>
<td>Include Fruit. <em>Fruits</em> must be in natural piece or light syrup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Same size as menu serving of vegetable</td>
<td>Include Vegetables. <em>Vegetables</em> can be served as side dish or prepared in meat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Fried Foods</td>
<td>Same a variety of non fried comfort items</td>
<td>Offer a variety of health, grilled, or sautéed comfort items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Sugar Sweets</td>
<td>Offer a variety of No Sugar Sweets Comfort beverages 100% fruit juice</td>
<td>Offer children's portion sizes of comfort and side items to be 70% of adult portion sizes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Portion size: Offer children’s portion sizes of comfort and side items to be 70% of adult portion sizes.

Nutrition Summary of Approved ¡Por Vida! Meals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¡Por Vida! Criteria</th>
<th>Summary of Approved ¡Por Vida! Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories (n=169)</td>
<td>≤ 700 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat (n=169)</td>
<td>≤ 23 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>≤ 8 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat (n=169)</td>
<td>≤ 0.5 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium (n=169)</td>
<td>≤ 750 milligrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate (n=156)</td>
<td>*optional – amnt. varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein (n=164)</td>
<td>*optional – 26-35 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber (n=156)</td>
<td>*optional – ≥7 grams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calories, total fat, and sodium averages are all about 60% of the ¡Por Vida! levels.

Recipe Analysis Process

- RD identifies restaurant to work with.
- Review menu with restaurant owner/manager to find items that may already meet the criteria.
- Collect recipes and ingredient details.
- Analyze recipes.
- Compare analysis to criteria.
- Discuss results with restaurant and options to make the item fit the criteria i.e. decrease salt in recipe, change an ingredient.
- Work to combine items into meals
- Restaurant develops marketing materials.
- Launch Restaurant!

RESTAURANT PARTICIPANTS
Current Status of the Program

- 22 total partners including restaurants and institutional settings
- 187 total locations where ¿Por Vida! meals are being served
- 566 total meal selections offered in Bexar County

¿Por Vida! Program Evaluation

- Objective – to measure patron purchasing behaviors during the ¿Por Vida! menu designation initiative.
- Method – a cross-sectional design and survey data to assess 23 restaurants and 152 restaurant patrons through an environmental assessment, patron awareness surveys, and key informant interviews.
- Results – Most patrons considered taste and cost very important in their decisions. Strongest predictor of choosing a ¿Por Vida! item was patron age (18-35) and if patrons saw the ¿Por Vida! logo.
- Conclusion – Menu logo designation initiatives can potentially influence patron purchasing behaviors among a segment of the population when the logo is visible.

Restaurant Evaluation

- Objective – to assess implementation and feedback regarding ¿Por Vida!, a menu labeling and healthy item recognition program for food service establishments.
- Methods – A cross-sectional study was conducted across San Antonio institutions which included environmental assessments, patron awareness surveys, and key informant interviews.
- Results – Patrons who valued cost more highly were less likely to have purchase a ¿Por Vida! item. Patrons who saw the ¿Por Vida! logo were more likely to purchase the item.
- Conclusion – Menu logos in the workplace can influence purchasing behaviors, specifically among less cost conscious patrons.

Institutional Partner Evaluation

- Objective – to assess implementation and feedback regarding ¿Por Vida!, a menu labeling and healthy item recognition program for food service establishments.
- Methods – A cross-sectional study was conducted across San Antonio institutions which included environmental assessments, patron awareness surveys, and key informant interviews.
- Results – Patrons who valued cost more highly were less likely to have purchase a ¿Por Vida! item. Patrons who saw the ¿Por Vida! logo were more likely to purchase the item.
- Conclusion – Menu logos in the workplace can influence purchasing behaviors, specifically among less cost conscious patrons.
¡Por Vida! Program Expansion

- Institutional Settings
  - Worksites
  - Hospitals
  - Cafeterias
  - Universities
  - Senior Living Communities
- Other counties in Texas
  - Williamson
  - Burnet
  - Gillespie
  - Wichita

Suggestions For You

- Be realistic and flexible.
- Build relationships & collaborate.
- Integrate full-time registered dietitians in public health.
- Fight the food police mindset. Put yourself in the restaurant manager/owner’s shoes.
- Provide on-going staff training for restaurants.
- Maintain open and up-to-date communication among coalition members.
- Ask restaurants to cover the costs for marketing and promotion.

Thank You

Kasey Pape, MS, RD, LD
San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
kasey.pape@sanantonio.gov
Phone: 210-207-5261

www.porvidasa.com