



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of School Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief 
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: April 27, 2015

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #22-15 REVISED**
Statements Supporting Accommodations for Children with Disabilities
in the Child Nutrition Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to ensuring that all children have access to healthy meals that meet their dietary needs. The FNS has facilitated access for children with special dietary needs through regulations and guidance for the Child Nutrition Programs, including the:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP), NSLP 210.10(m);
- School Breakfast Program (SBP), SBP 220.8(m);
- Special Milk Program (SMP), SMP 220.23(d);
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), CACFP 226.20(m); and
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), FSP 225.16(f)(4).

The FNS guidance includes FNS Instruction 783.2, *Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Needs* and the USDA's manual, *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*.

The purpose of this memorandum is to expand the list of **acceptable medical professionals** that may:

- sign a medical statement for meal accommodations in the Child Nutrition Programs; and
- recommend alternate foods for children whose disability restricts their diets.

A broader list of medical providers will improve access to meal accommodations for children with special dietary needs while balancing the administrative burden placed on program operators and participants requesting meal accommodations.

Current regulations and guidance require program operators to provide reasonable accommodations for all meals and snacks for children whose disability restricts their diet, when supported by a medical statement signed by a **licensed physician**. However, in many states, laws permit specific **state recognized medical professionals** to treat patients and write medical prescriptions. With this in mind, FNS has determined that in addition to licensed physicians, it is reasonable to also permit other recognized medical authorities to complete and sign a medical statement for meal accommodations in the Child Nutrition Programs, and recommend alternate foods for children whose disability restricts their diet. This decision is at the discretion of a state agency.

A state recognized medical authority for this purpose is a state licensed health care professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. In Connecticut, a “recognized medical authority” is a professional recognized by the State Department of Public Health, and includes the following:

- physicians;
- physician assistants;
- doctors of osteopathy; and
- advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

Based on this new USDA policy, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will now allow medical statements for children with disabilities to be signed by any state recognized medical authority specified above. **This is effective immediately.**

FNS is working to update its accommodations guidance to reflect this update and other issues currently under review. The CSDE will also be updating this information in the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs*, and the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Questions may be directed to your CSDE [school nutrition team member](#).

JF:sff

Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE’s [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) Web page.