Optimal health for children should include adequate nutrition to support proper growth and development; including meeting nutrient needs for bone health, lean muscle, cognitive development and more. Ensuring that the solutions for supporting child health is evidenced-based and factors in the nutrition needs of children makes it easier to create opportunities for children and families to access nutritious foods in the communities where they live, learn, work and play. The development of a family prescription pad enables medical providers to work with families to select action-oriented nutrition and activity goals with an emphasis on accessing resources in the community that enable healthy food choices.

**Prioritizing children’s nutritional needs to support optimal growth, development and beyond**

Efforts to support optimal health for children should address nutrition needs for proper growth and development, prevention of obesity and other chronic diseases, while setting a strong foundation for learning and lifelong success. With a growing number of priorities critical to overall child health, nutritional needs can be easily overlooked, posing risk for inadequate consumption of nutrient-dense foods during childhood and beyond. Consideration for the nutrition needs of children, which differ from the population as a whole, is essential for optimal solutions that support healthy, sustainable eating patterns while meeting nutrient needs of children during critical growth windows.

Data shows that most Americans are not meeting the recommendations for vegetables, fruits, and dairy, which all provide important nutrients that support optimal health as well as success in school for children. Encouraging consumption of nutrient dense foods, both from plant-based and dairy sources, can help close the nutrient gaps that exist among Americans of all ages.

Providing nutrition education, as well as caregiver and family engagement, is an important way to establish children's lifelong healthy eating patterns, ultimately supporting their health and academic success.

**Community solutions: the role of school meal programs and nutrition education**

Research suggests that eating school breakfast every day is associated with healthier dietary intakes among U.S. school children. Additionally, consumption of specific foods made readily available in school meal programs—fruits, vegetables or dairy products—improves nutrient needs of children, which differ from the population as a whole, and unintentionally limit access to and the consumption of nutritious, nutrient-dense foods like milk and dairy foods. With many children and adolescents being overweight and undernourished, access to nutritious and wholesome foods, as well as nutrition education, is essential to help children reach their full health potential as adults.

Recommendations that overlook the nutritional needs of children for optimal growth and development, or that generally restrict or eliminate foods could unintentionally limit access to and the consumption of nutritious, nutrient-dense foods like milk and dairy foods. With many children and adolescents being overweight and undernourished, access to nutritious and wholesome foods, as well as nutrition education, is essential to help children reach their full health potential as adults.

In an effort to overcome some of these challenges, community solutions that focus on access to nutritious foods and nutrition programs that support child health are essential. Efforts to support optimal health for children should address nutrition needs for proper growth and development, prevention of obesity and other chronic diseases, while setting a strong foundation for learning and lifelong success. With a growing number of priorities critical to overall child health, nutritional needs can be easily overlooked, posing risk for inadequate consumption of nutrient-dense foods during childhood and beyond. Consideration for the nutrition needs of children, which differ from the population as a whole, is essential for optimal solutions that support healthy, sustainable eating patterns while meeting nutrient needs of children during critical growth windows.

Data shows that most Americans are not meeting the recommendations for vegetables, fruits, and dairy, which all provide important nutrients that support optimal health as well as success in school for children. Encouraging consumption of nutrient dense foods, both from plant-based and dairy sources, can help close the nutrient gaps that exist among Americans of all ages.

Providing nutrition education, as well as caregiver and family engagement, is an important way to establish children’s lifelong healthy eating patterns, ultimately supporting their health and academic success.

**Evaluation with Community Partners**

To evaluate the Family Wellness Rx program, Dairy Council of California has partnered with AltaMed Health Services, who provides services throughout Southern California. One hundred and fifty Family Wellness Prescription pads were distributed to pediatric services throughout Los Angeles County to supplement counseling with goal setting that families take home as a reminder of their plan.

- Three AltaMed clinics piloted the Family Wellness Prescription in the Fall of 2019.
- Educational video developed for providers on how implement the Prescription Pad into their practice.
- Prescription tool and accompanying educator’s guide was implemented during individual and group sessions; used to supplement counseling with goal setting that families take home as a reminder of their plan.

**Results from Pilot Evaluation Surveys**

- Providers indicated serving milk instead of sugary drinks, offering water throughout the day and reducing consumption of empty calories were the most common goals set with families.
- Parents responded positively to the Wellness Rx sheet and the information helps guide conversations to discuss dietary changes with families according to 100% of providers.
- Providers unanimously found “choosing healthy beverages” and “addressing food insecurity such as through school meals” very useful.

**Next steps**

- The Family Wellness Prescription program will be rolled-out to all 15 AltaMed locations in LA County.
- Implementation of the new resource by providers requires ample time and education.
- Identify opportunities to document usage in the electronic health record.
Elevating Child Nutrition Needs with the Family Wellness Rx

Poster Abstract:
Optimal health for children should include adequate nutrition to support proper growth and development; including meeting nutrient needs for bone health, lean muscle, cognitive development and more. With an increasing amount of priorities critical to overall child health, nutritional needs can be easily overlooked, posing risk for inadequate consumption of nutrient dense foods in early childhood and beyond. Ensuring that the solutions for supporting child health is evidenced-based and factors in the nutrition needs of children makes it easier to create opportunities for children and families to access nutritious foods in the communities where they live, learn, work and play.

The Family Wellness Prescription is a tool for medical providers and health educators to address childhood overweight and obesity using a family engagement approach. Developing healthy lifestyle habits at a young age is critical for lifelong health and chronic disease prevention. By providing families with guidance on realistic, healthy eating goals for self-selection, as well as referrals to nutrition resources unique to their community, the Family Wellness Prescription offers an innovative approach to address childhood overweight and obesity.

To evaluate the Family Wellness Rx program, Dairy Council of California has partnered with AltaMed Health Services, who provides services throughout Southern California. One hundred and fifty Family Wellness Prescription pads will be distributed to pediatric services throughout Los Angeles County to supplement counseling with goal setting that families take home as a reminder of their plan. Three AltaMed clinics are piloting implementation of the Family Wellness Prescription in the fall of 2019. The Health Education and Wellness Department along with the Medical Director developed an educational video for providers on how implement the Prescription pad into their practice. The Health and Wellness Champion for Change manager met with each location to deliver the Prescription tool and provided the accompanying educator’s guide along with the link to the video to explain how the resource can be used during individual and group sessions. Two months after delivery, an online survey to determine feasibility and outcomes will be administered to providers at the three sites. Outcomes will inform the roll-out to all 15 locations in the LA County. The poster will describe the outcomes of this project and how to enhance nutrition education in community clinics and resource centers.

Presenters:
Kristal Shelden, MPH, RDN
Project Manager, Nutrition Science
Dairy Council of California
Sacramento, CA

Trina Robertson, MS, RDN
Project Manager II, Collective Action and Impact
Dairy Council of California
Irvine, CA

Maria Frye, RDN
Community Nutrition Adviser, Nutrition Science
Dairy Council of California
Irvine, CA