



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

For Release: Immediate

Date: Feb. 9, 2007

Contact: Carol Schriber, (919) 733-9190

“Eat Smart” Healthy Meeting Guide Released

CHAPEL HILL – As part of ongoing efforts to improve the health of North Carolinians by helping them to achieve a healthy weight, the N.C. Division of Public Health (DPH) and WakeMed today formally released a new publication, *Eat Smart North Carolina: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings and Events*, during a presentation to the Association Executives of North Carolina (AENC).

The Eat Smart Healthy Meeting Guide aims to increase opportunities for healthy eating by providing practical guidelines for anyone who is in charge of food served at events, helping them choose lower-fat and lower-calorie foods and drinks. The guide can be used in working with sales staff and chefs to plan delicious, nutritious meals and breaks for event attendees. It was written by DPH staff and sponsored by WakeMed.

“From the choices set around the table at office lunch meetings to the food options at a large hotel conference, it is important for the people in charge of the food that is served to realize the role they can play by offering more opportunities for people to make healthy eating decisions,” said presenter Sheree Vodicka as she introduced the guide to AENC meeting participants. Vodicka is a registered, licensed dietitian with Public Health’s Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch.

“The attendees today who take this guide back for their organizations to adopt are helping in the fight against obesity and are modeling behavior we would like more businesses to adopt,” Vodicka said.

AENC includes not only hundreds of association professionals, but also representatives from various aspects of the hospitality and service industry. So, AENC is one of the many audiences that the guide is intended to influence. AENC Executive Director Jim Thompson wanted to provide the guide to his 540 members, who plan events and meetings for organizations all over the state.

“With more and more Americans trying to eat healthy, people are concerned about those situations where they have no control over what they are being served,” said Thompson. “So employers, conference organizers, event planners, and everyone else in the hospitality industry – we are all interested in ways we can offer healthier options to meet this growing need. And AENC wants to lead the way through our example today.”

(MORE)



In keeping with the suggestions put forth in the guide, Sheraton Chapel Hill Hotel’s Executive Chef Mark Griffin planned today’s AENC luncheon to ensure that healthy options would be available to meeting attendees.

“We were already trying to provide healthy options for our health-conscious consumers, but this guide gives my staff an additional tool for planning great tasting, healthy meals and snacks for our guests,” said Griffin.

The Eat Smart Healthy Meeting Guide provides healthy food and beverage suggestions for various event meals and snacks, practical tips for stocking vending machines, and examples of the calories and fat in popular food and beverage items. Additionally, the guide provides sample menus and suggestions on how to replace typical offerings with healthier options. The guide also provides a sample Eat Smart North Carolina Healthy Foods Policy that can be adapted and implemented by any organization, agency or community group where foods and beverages are served.

“We hope that AENC and the Sheraton are the first of many organizations to make the important step of choosing to offer healthy choices,” said Vodicka. “Whether a person is in charge of ordering food for the eight people in their office or planning a luncheon for 200, the Eat Smart Healthy Meeting Guide can help them make it their organization’s policy to provide opportunities for healthy eating.”

The Eat Smart Healthy Meeting Guide is one of many resources that supports Eat Smart, Move More...NC, a statewide movement that encourages healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play, and pray. For more information or to download a copy of the guide for your organization, see the Web site at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

Established in 1955, Association Executives of North Carolina (AENC) is a 540-member organization offering networking, professional development and relevant information to promote and advance the profession of Association Management. AENC membership is made up of association CEOs and staff members, and representatives from the hospitality and service industries.

###