



Roundtable news

A bimonthly newsletter on nutrition policy and legislation concerning the child and adult care food program

FEBRUARY 2006

ROUNDTABLE GETS ANSWERS

Responding to numerous requests for help, Roundtable leaders asked USDA and NSD to provide training on block claiming and five day reconciliation at the January meeting. Prior to the meeting Ed asked members to send in their questions on block claiming and five-day reconciliation. Five pages of questions were received indicating the depth of misunderstanding on the topics. These were shared with federal and state administrators a few days before the session. On the morning of the meeting it was decided that one way to approach the subject matter would be to read each question, ask members for the answer and then have federal and state administrators clarify or answer as necessary. Following are the questions and answers as best as can be recalled by those taking notes and edited by administrators for accuracy and correctness. We want to take this opportunity up front to thank all parties involved for their patience in this arduous event. We hope that participants came away with a much better sense of these complex rules.

Please note that some of the questions are redundant (as different members asked similar questions) and in the final area concerning five-day reconciliation it turned out to be easier and faster to just give an explanation of the rules rather than answer every question.

Block Claiming

Jesus started with the definition: "A block claim is a claim for reimbursement submitted by a facility

See **Answers**, page 2, column 1

Sacramento, January 19, 2006

CHAIR REPORT

As Paula James was late Ed Mattson welcomed the members, thanked Karen Gillham, from the Nutrition Services Division for arranging the meeting location and began the morning with introductions. With no further delay Ed moved right into the day's training session on block claiming and five-day reconciliation.

NUTRITION SERVICES DIVISION

Ronna Jakobitz, Karen Gillham, Ruth Cardiel, Janice Hunt, Kelley Knapp and Lynette Brown attended the meeting. Suzanna Nye and Barbara Longo also attended at the end of the day and gave

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on which the number of meals claimed for one or more meal type...is identical for 15 consecutive days within a claiming period.”

1. You have a Spanish speaking provider and she is block claiming for either breakfast or dinner and the person who is to interpret for you does not work at that time what do you do? **A.** *The unannounced visit can be performed during a different meal service. The purpose of the visit is to validate the claim from the previous month and find out if the provider does have a legitimate reason for the block claim. If the provider does not have a legitimate reason one of the tools to validate the claim and ensure the children claimed were in attendance is to perform parent contact surveys. Other tools to validate the claim are enrollment forms stating the hours and days the child is in care and sign-in/out sheets. There was a great deal of concern expressed throughout the morning by sponsors about any rush to parent surveys. They frequently are not returned, unreliable and ineffective and they cost a lot in terms of time and effort to process.*
2. Provider block claims one month but when you go out she isn't block claiming? **A.** *Does not matter. You want to make every attempt to validate the block claim, how and why. There was a lot of discussion regarding this question because a provider that once in awhile block claims may otherwise be doing her paperwork correctly. Sometimes children are present 15 days in a row and then are*

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Child Care Food Program Roundtable is to promote health and well-being of children in child care through providing leadership and advocating for enhanced and expanded CCFP.

absent. Jesus Mendoza (USDA, WRO) mentioned that one way to validate a block claim would be to check parent sign in and out sheets. Sponsors pointed out that not all providers keep these. And further asked if this is what will now be required in such cases, why don't we all have parent signatures on our monthly claim forms? We used to. Then no follow-ups would be needed just to have a conversation with a provider to find out if there was a legitimate reason for the block claim. Jesus stated that a provider's statement indicating that no children were out is not enough reason and sponsors must have documentation confirming all children were in attendance. It could be from the parent or a parent conversation. Sponsors pointed out that after we ask for the reason, providers are offended when we don't believe them.

3. Provider only has 1 or 2 children for block claiming - do you still need to go out? **A.** Yes.
4. Provider serves breakfast from 6:30 to 8:30; some children arrive, eat breakfast and leave for school. Provider block claims. Are we expected to be there for the two hours? How can we verify? **A.** *You are not required to stay for an entire shift. If the provider is serving shifts (established reason) document your findings, the reason the provider gives and why you accepted the reason.*
5. Provider is found to be Seriously Deficient; part of CA is keeping in/out with parent's signature; provider complies and the Serious Deficiency is rescinded: Can we request she keep in/out indefinitely? **A.** *Yes you can go beyond the minimum for the integrity of the program.*

The **CCFP Roundtable News** is a bimonthly publication for members of the Child Care Food Program Roundtable, an affiliate organization of the California Food Policy Advocates, 116 New Montgomery Street, Suite 633, San Francisco, CA 94105.

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Membership is from Jan 1 to Dec 31 every year. For more information please contact Ed at 530-677-9410 or mred94523@earthlink.net

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NSD Report, continued from page 1

closing remarks. Ronna welcomed the participants and along with Janice, Karen and Lynette gave the following state report.

NSD Reorganization: Ronna reviewed the new organizational structure. Phyllis Bramson-Paul, as we all know is Director; Debbie Meeker is Assistant Director and Nutrition Programs Section Chief. Barbara Longo is the recently hired Manager of the Nutrition Programs Administration Units. Under her Ronna Jakobitz is the Manager of the Community Nutrition Programs Unit; the School Nutrition Programs Unit Manager has not yet been hired. Reporting to Ronna are the Day Care Home Team with Karen Gillham and Ruth Cardiel, the Child Care Center Team with John Copley and Claire Camp, the Adult Day Care Center Team with Virginia Jackson and Sharon Hall, the Summer Food Service Program Team with Melissa Garza and Patty Atherton. Al Curry is floater between the center teams.

Ronna recounted her long and varied background with the Division. She was a CACFP analyst from 1981-90, lead analyst working with FDCH budgets from 1987-90, Adult Day Care Program Manager for 10 years, and Summer Food Service Program Manager from 1995-96 when it was added to the unit. In 2000 she became Manager of the Resources and Information Management Unit for one year, and Manager of the Compliance, Audit Resolution and Management Assistance Unit for 3 years, and has provided management support to the Director and Assistant Director for the last 8 years. She was Acting Policy Manager for the past year and a half and Acting Nutrition Programs Administration Manager for the past 9 months.

Janice Hunt reported on three new Field Staff: Mary Anne Faust in the Orange County/San Bernardino area, Esther Ho and Boise Labisi in the LA area.

Update from Community Nutrition Programs

Unit: Ronna then addressed a number of issues concerning her unit. She said they have a number of Management Bulletins that were in process at the end of the year which need to be renumbered for 2006. They will be coming out soon. She said it is their plan to provide as much guidance as possible. Along those lines she underscored that it is their intention to provide technical assistance and training at Roundtable and other small group meetings. They will be working with the Field Staff to insure everyone is on the same page. She readily admitted that the renewals have been rough this year but for the next two they should be much easier as only updates will be necessary. She expressed appreciation for sponsor's cooperation during this year's renewal process. Management Plans and budgets are now well documented she said.

Training: Lynette Brown reported on this year's upcoming mandatory training. For centers they are planning 6 workshops, 3 in Southern CA, 2 in Northern and 1 in the Central Valley. For family child care homes they will have 1 in the North and 1 in the South. They are planned for the April-June time period. They intend to focus on implementing the second interim rule with an opportunity to ask questions. She said you will need to pre-register but they will accept walk-ins that have their vendor number. There will be a \$35 fee to cover the cost of meals at the hotel. She said they intend to do a better job tracking participation this time and that is why the vendor number is essential for registration.

Lynette stated that on-line training was a success last year. All family child care sponsors completed the training and all but 2 of the 900 child care centers completed it.

On-line Claims Payment: Ronna reported that NSD has finally gone out to bid last Monday on their new management information/claim payment system (CNIPS). They expect it to be completed in perhaps two years time.

Center Advances: Ronna reported that a Management Bulletin is going out Monday on center cash advances. As they have hinted for the past few months, they are going ahead with a plan to recover center cash advances beginning in March and completed before the end of September 2006. They plan to recover 30% of the meal payment (15% of a 100% advance) per month.

Closing Remarks: Suzanna Nye, Field Services Manager and Barbara Longo, new Manager of the Nutrition Programs Administration Unit, came at the end of the day and made the following brief remarks. Suzanna stated that they are trying to improve internal processes and want to help us meet the new regulatory requirements. Barbara said that she has been on the job now for two weeks; she is listening to what we are saying and understands that things need to be worked on. She addressed our concern for a guidance manual and said she will be seeking input from her staff as well as sponsors on its development. Regarding Management Bulletin timeliness she said she came from Health Services where she did several things. She enjoyed working with stakeholders and policy makers to achieve common goals. She said she had an open door policy and told us to feel free to call her. She concluded that CACFP is one of two major priorities this year and she and Suzanna will be working together to work out the wrinkles and make it seamless to us.

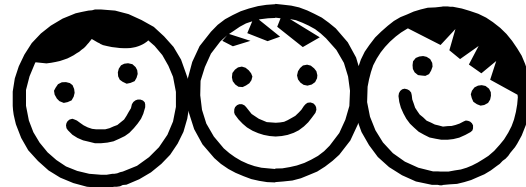
USDA

Jesus Mendoza, Section Chief for USDA, WRO’s Community Section (CACFP, SFSP & TEFAP), gave the following report. He advised that Janet Allen, Director of Special Nutrition Programs for the WRO is leaving in the middle of March to become the new Manager for Peace Corps Recruiting in San Francisco. He said USDA would honor all of its commitments regarding Roundtable meetings in May at the Regional Office (WRO). He closed his brief report by saying that the first CCAP assessment for the year begins the week of Jan 23. It will be lead by another Regional Office but Lucy Jackson from the WRO will be on the team.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Forum/Frac Conference: This year’s conference, “Rise to the Challenge: Empowering You to Succeed in the Changing World of CACFP,” is scheduled for February 24-28 in Washington, DC. All members, and especially those that have never attended a national advocacy conference, are encouraged to check it out. Register online at <http://frac.A2H.kintera.org/2006conference>. Take the opportunity to meet with your elected representatives in Washington, DC.

CACFP Week: Ed reported that CACFP Week is March 12-18. Members are encouraged to use the week as a way to market the program. They can



contact their local media outlet(s) and

suggest a story highlighting their program and the good it is doing, for instance, combating childhood overweight. They can also contact their elected representative and “put a face on the program” as we have recommended so many times in the past. We have not seen all the social program cuts yet Ed warned and CACFP could be next. Invite your Congressperson to lunch; take them out to a home. Stress the importance of CACFP and its role in insuring quality child care and instilling good eating habits early in life.

Trustline: This issue goes back to September. Members have two basic concerns. First, how to complete the site application for Trustline providers that change families, capacities and addresses regularly. Second, how to deal with health and safety issues including capacities way beyond that allowed for a licensed home due to large numbers of family members. Members expressed a concern that health and safety issues cannot simply be referred to licensing. Some have suggested that Child Protective Services could be contacted or 9-1-1 in cases of imminent threat.

Others suggested that sponsors have the authority/discretion to set their own internal policies in the case of dangerous environments including capacity issues (e.g., sponsors might limit Trustline providers to capacities allowed in licensed homes). Janice stated that while NSD cannot make policy they will think about and address the capacity issue and address changes on the site application in the near future.

Training at Upcoming Roundtable Meetings:

Members discussed training topics for upcoming Roundtable meetings. They agreed that the issue of block claiming and five-day reconciliation was so important that it should also be presented in March in Los Angeles to give Southern California sponsors a crack at it. Ed suggested, as a result of feedback from members on a recent sample monitor review form, that the May training topic be family day care home monitoring – rules and expectations versus reality. Ed agreed to collect review forms from members prior to the meeting. We agreed that one outcome from the meeting be a model form and/or instructions for sponsors.

Serious Deficiency Guidance: In negotiations with NSD we agreed to try to wrap up our work on the guidance in one more meeting. Ad hoc committee members agreed to meet on February 22 at 10:00 AM in Sacramento. The guide will still need NSD and USDA approval but hopefully it will be out within the next few months.

Meal Time Observation Policy: NSD’s old Management Manual required that a meal service be observed during at least 2 of the 3 required annual visits. Current regulations require that 2 of 3 visits be unannounced and that 1 of the 2 be at meal time. NSD agreed to follow federal rules on this issue.

September Meeting Date & Location: We had tabled the setting of this date as NSD was not certain it could attend due to prior commitments. NSD confirmed that any date in September is problematic so we should plan our meeting at a date that works for us. We agreed to September

20-21st in San Jose area. The 4C’s of Santa Clara County has agreed to provide meeting space.

Delayed Payments: Members have recently reported some trouble getting timely payments from NSD. In both cases Ed sent an Email to Phyllis Savage, Manager of Child Development and Nutrition Fiscal Services, to see if anything had changed. In both cases Ms. Savage graciously responded and explained that nothing has changed. Although regulations do allow CDE to take up to 45 days to pay legitimate claims Ms. Savage assured me that “the State has done and will continue to do everything in its power to expedite payments to our nutrition sponsors.” She went on to confirm that “[p]rompt and accurate payment of child development and nutrition funds remains the priority of my Unit. This means, in 99.9 percent of the cases, payment will be made well before the 45 days required....”

Translation Help: Ed shared with members information on a service used by Cathleen Logan, Executive Director of Association for Child Development and current President of the National CACFP Forum, which allows their staff to talk with a non-English speaking provider using this translation service. I found during a preliminary search of their web site www.languageline.com that they charge by the minute. Cathleen reported success with the service so members might want to check it out.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

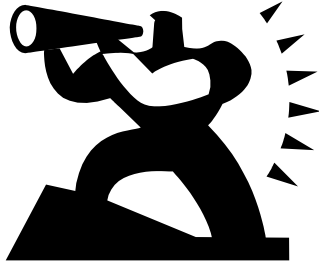
Many of you have still not renewed your membership for 2006. Please do so immediately. We will be changing the newsletter directory shortly for paid members only.

Advisory Committee 2006: Our board member slate for 2006 was approved. In addition to renewing members Cary Steen and Terry Talavera, we welcome new members Joan LaRocque from Child Nutrition Programs of Southern California, Noemi Torres from Options – child care centers, and Deborah Zaragoza from

Child Development Associates. Thank you all for your interest in serving on our board.

CONFERENCE REPORT

The Roundtable's 15th Annual Conference, "Celebrating Fifteen Years: Our Vision Our Future," has been set for the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco, from October 16-18, 2006. Yes you read that correctly, we return to San Francisco - the site of our 1997 conference! We are pleased to report that the hotel rooms and meeting spaces have all been upgraded since our last conference. You can check it out on-line at www.cathedralhillhotel.com.



We hope to make our 15th anniversary something special and returning to San Francisco, everyone's favorite City, is a good way to start. One way you can help make it special is to get involved in the workshop process. We will be looking for a number of sponsors with Second Interim Rule best practices to share. Agree to head up a panel of your peers or serve on a panel. Watch for our call for presenters shortly on CACFP Talk and on the Roundtable's listserv. If you have ideas for workshop or general session presenters/speakers, exhibitors or sponsors, please let us know. Get involved. [Help us serve your training needs!](#)

CALIFORNIA FOOD POLICY ADVOCATES

Ken Hecht was unable to attend the meeting but left a written report, excerpts from which were shared with members.

Wrap Up Last Year & Governor's Proposed Budget: Ken stated that last year was an extraordinary year especially for schools where sodas were banned, competitive foods were limited and a new California Fresh Start pilot program was begun with \$18.2 million for school breakfasts. Ken advised that he had been told that the administration intends to continue with the nutrition revolution this year; CFPA remains

hopeful with the Governor. He went on to report that not much happened with the Governor's proposed budget. There is a big kick for physical activity - \$85 million but not much money in nutrition. Funding will continue for the California Fresh Start pilot as well as school breakfast and summer meal start-up. State meal funding will continue with a slight increase (for a complete analysis of the Governor's budget see www.cfpa.net).

CFPA's Legislative Agenda for 2006:

- *Fresh Start for CACFP* - Ken reported that he spoke with Kim Belshé, Secretary for Health & Human Services, on January 17 about a possible fresh start pilot in CACFP. He proposed that a CACFP version, based on approximately 45 million breakfasts per year at 10 cents each, would cost only \$4.5 million of Prop 98 funding. He said he thought that money should not be an issue as the amount is so small. Per our conversation in Emeryville, he stated that the idea behind the pilot is to get rid of the juice and substitute fresh fruit. He concluded by saying he was not sure where it goes from here. He has made the proposal; they need to react.
- *School Lunch & Breakfast Reform* - Ken highlighted a three-part bill to improve participation and nutritional quality in school meals programs. It is authored by Bonnie Garcia (AB 1916); he has no bill number yet. It would i) mandate a breakfast program at all schools with 40% free and reduced; ii) mandate implementation of Provision 2 (a way to serve all meals free) at all schools with 85% or more free and reduced; and iii) reduce calories in the school lunch entrée and offer additional servings of salad, fruit or other healthy items instead. This idea came from the Center on Weight & Health Ken reported.
- *Healthy Foods in Neighborhood Stores* - This two-part bill is intended to increase the availability of healthy food by retail grocers in low-income neighborhoods by i) providing a state-funded incentive to Food Stamp

participants to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables; and ii) providing a state-funded incentive (refrigerated display cases and mentoring) to retail grocers in low-income neighborhoods to sell fresh fruits and vegetables.

- *Food Stamp Program Simplification* – This three-part bill to increase participation in the Food Stamp Program would i) change from quarterly to semi-annual reporting; ii) provide for recertification without a face-to-face interview; and iii) conduct a pilot to test eligibility based on income alone (without an asset test).
- Ken reported they will also be monitoring implementation of SB 12, SB 281, SB 965, AB 1385 and AB 1392. For AB 1385 they are working on a tape to tape direct certification system Ken advised. He further reported that NSD has asked CDE to increase funding for school meals by \$70 million to pick up paid kids dropped in the 1980's from state meal funding. It was approved in the Ed Committee however CACFP is not currently included.

Brief Look at Federal Picture: Ken reported that “we won; potential cuts to the Food Stamp Program for legal immigrants were eliminated” from the Conference Agreement on Budget Reconciliation.

(Editor's Note: the conference agreement was voted on by the House on December 19; the Senate subsequently deleted several minor provisions before it passed its version so the House must vote again, perhaps as early as February 1. This gives advocates one last chance to try to stop the other cuts which will still cause considerable hardship for low-income families and individuals, including cuts to Medicaid, child care and student loans (see CBPP web site for complete picture). The week of Jan 23 is a National Call-In Week. You may call your representative toll-free at 800-426-8073 and ask them to vote no on the budget cuts contained in S. 1932. I did.

Update: On Feb 1 the House unfortunately voted 216-214 for the bill but it was close! On Feb 6 the President announced his FY 2007 budget. According to FRAC it “proposes nutrition program cuts that would: limit states’ ability to get food stamps to 300,000 people in working families with children which are low income but not receiving cash welfare; weaken the WIC program; eliminate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) that provides nutrition assistance to more than 400,000 low-income elderly people; and eliminate the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) that supports local efforts to help needy families obtain nutrition benefits. Proposing these nutrition funding cuts—while making room for more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans—sets the wrong priorities for the nation.”)

WEB SITES FOR JAN 2006:

- www.language.com – online interpreter service, billed by the minute.
- www.cbpp.org – Center on Budget & Policy Priorities. Find more information here on the ongoing budget reconciliation process and cuts to low-income families and individuals. Find here also information on Earned Income Tax Credits for your low-income providers and parents.

Answers, continued from page 2

7. Providers who claim only one child or children from 1 family will almost always come up on block claim list (e.g., Trustlined providers). **A.** You still need to perform the visit and document the reason if validated.
8. No suggested parameters from USDA or state as to what is a legitimate reason for block claim. Guidelines would be helpful. My concern is that a monitor will think it's a valid reason, our state reviewer will not...then what? We would have been reimbursing meals on an invalid claim. **A.** The state will be looking at how sponsors validated block claims and making judgment calls. There followed a brief discussion of how everyone involved in this process, federal, state and sponsor alike, will be in a learning curve and

the hope is that a reasonable man standard will be applied.

9. I know there is nothing we can do about this one, however, it's just not a useful tool. Happens too often and is usually valid. A better tool might be defining a block claim when a provider claims ALL children for ALL meals EVERYDAY. Very awkward when presenting to providers. They kind of look at us like we're nuts. Any chance of allowing sponsors to validate a block claim when only 1 child or from 1 family without conducting a visit? **A. No.**
10. It seems if there is the same number of children claimed each day, if they are not the same children that should NOT be a red flag, especially if the enrollment supports the days/hours in care of each child. I think this is particularly true if the provider cares for 6 or fewer children. Could there be an upper limit set on the number of children so we could eliminate a block claim alert? (If the provider cares for 1-3 children, for instance, could we dispense with having to "prove" the block claim was legitimate?) **A. Not at this time.**
11. I understand the need to monitor block claim activity but the current set-up still may overlook questionable claims. A provider may claim 100 breakfasts, 100 lunches and 100 snacks in a particular month and not be red-flagged as a block claimer. How? She does not claim the same number each day for all meals but what she claims each week may repeat itself (i.e., she always claims the same # of meals every M/W/F, and a different number (but the same # for T/Th) on T/Th. I am not asking for more work but the current system may penalize some and overlook some as well. **A. If a sponsor believes or thinks a claim is suspicious they should follow up.**
12. I assume we only look for block claims within a calendar month. I don't believe Minute Menu looks beyond the monthly claim. It would be unduly cumbersome/labor intensive to look continuously at every consecutive day of operation. **A. Yes only block claims within a calendar month, no carry over.**
13. Situation #1 – Detect block claim 3 children claimed for breakfast. Follow up with meal visit. Provider claiming 2 children now for breakfast, 1 child is no longer in the day care. Still able to validate? **A. Yes, don't forget we are not validating a block claim by looking at the situation during the follow-up visit, although that may support your findings. You are there to document the reason for the block claiming month.**
14. Situation #2 – On a site visit at the end of December while looking over the paperwork the monitor can see provider is a block claimer. Can the monitor validate on site now? This would help us not have to do a follow up visit the following month. **A. USDA agreed to research the answer to this question.**
15. Situation #3 – Detect block claim – not able to validate. Retrain provider on the importance of accurate attendance. Sufficient? **A. No, should conduct parent verification. This answer caused some discussion. Must all block claims be validated? Is parent verification the only method? Can't the sponsor simply provide further training and oversight and declare the provider seriously deficient if corrective action is not taken per USDA bulletin (see USDA bulletin 05-03, page 12, questions 3-4)?**
16. Situation #4 – Detect block claim wait to do visit until the following month with group. In the meantime 2nd month block claim – 1 follow up visit take care of both block claims? **A. Yes.**
17. Situation #5 – Detect block claim - 1 child only for a meal, however claims the majority of children at a different meal (not a block claimer for other meals). Does USDA really want us to focus our attention on the 1child? **A. Yes.**
18. Situation #6 – Detect block claim – 1 family of 2 kids for evening meals. However, unable to do unannounced visit very bad neighborhood especially at night. Instead of unannounced visit, parent verification okay? **A. No, must still conduct unannounced visit ideally at applicable meal time but can do at another time of day if necessary. This caused some discussion. If you are not going to visit at the time of the problem why not just call the**

provider and determine the reason for the block claim, sponsors asked.

meal service, or why there might be block claims submitted for all of its meal services.”

19. Situation #7 – Detect block claim – 2 kids dinner – perform follow up visit validate. However 2 months later comes up as a block claimer for a different meal. Another visit to validate the new meal? What is the focus of CDE? **A.** *No, once you validate a block claim you are not required to conduct another unannounced visit for the year. USDA agreed to research whether it is exactly 12 months (from the date of detection) or until the end of the calendar year.*
20. Situation #8 – Perform a site visit in October all children present for lunch (not block claiming throughout the month). However, in November shows up as a block claimer for lunch. Is the previous visit in October sufficient? What would another visit show? We already saw the children. **A.** *No. You have to do a visit and validate the reason for the block claim in November (see # 12 above).*
21. I'm still confused about the consecutive work days. Do days of operation have to be considered? In other words if they don't work on weekends we don't count weekends in the consecutive work days? **A.** *Do not count weekends if they are not providing care on weekends. A sponsor asked what if the provider closes on a normal work day. Response to second question, no, the 15 consecutive days are meant to be 15 consecutive days of operation.*
22. With all our staff the biggest thing we're struggling with is what "acceptable" reasons for block claiming are. The direction from USDA/NSD has not been very clear. And then the next following question is what documentation is required once we get the providers' reasons. **A.** *USDA is not going to supply a list of acceptable reasons. This is left up to the sponsor; however the State may disagree with your decision. USDA bulletin 05-03, page 13, question 5 addresses documentation: "a note placed in the sponsor's monitoring file should be adequate. The sponsor must put enough information in the review file to explain why a facility might regularly submit block claims for a specific*
23. If the sponsor has a logical explanation on file does the 60 day follow-up visit need to be completed? **A.** *Yes.*
24. If there is no explanation on file and the follow-up visit results in all children being in care; enrollment forms and claim have been reviewed and all appear to be fine; another claim is submitted and block claim is detected; does the sponsor need to complete another follow-up visit? **A.** *If the first follow-up visit was as a result of identifying a block claim and the sponsor established that the provider has a legitimate reason to block claim, there would be no need to conduct another follow-up visit. However, if the first follow-up visit was not related to a block claim, then the sponsor must conduct a follow-up visit within 60 days from identifying a block claim.*
25. Will logical explanations be scrutinized by NSD during administrative reviews? **A.** *Yes. Sponsors indicated that they hoped NSD remembers this training.*
26. This is a simple one but here goes: The way I understand block claim is: If a child out of 8 is absent one day. Let's say the 10th of the month; this provider is not block claiming for the month. I spoke with our local CDE/NSD person, and her response was - If it is only one day we will still consider it a block claim. I don't think this follows the definition of block claim. I know that there are providers who we will keep a closer eye on. My question is, Will NSD be consistent with the definition or will we have inconsistencies during reviews? **A.** *NSD will use the block claiming definition from USDA which is outlined in Management Bulletin 05-211.*
27. If a provider shows a block claim for the month of October and we have 60 days to see them but can't get out right away, so we have to wait; now 30 days has passed and they send in November paperwork and now they are not block claiming, so, do we still need to see them since they are now not showing a block claim anymore? **A.** *Yes you must validate the block claim from October. This*

answer caused some frustration amongst sponsors because they wonder how some 60 days later a parent or provider can remember what happened.

28. If we do not see as many children as the provider is block claiming, but one or more children have since dropped, can the claim be validated? **A.** *Yes with a valid reason (see # 12 above).*
29. If one or more children were not present due to being sick, getting picked up early, holiday time, etc., can we validate the claim? Does it depend on the situation or if it is a “good” provider? **A.** *It depends on the situation.*
30. If a block claim is not validated on the first try, when do we go back again? **A.** *If the sponsor is unable to validate the claim, there is no legitimate reason for the block claim, no records to support the claim, and parent surveys do not validate the claim, the sponsor must disallow those meals that cannot be validated. The provider can also be declared seriously deficient for providing false information. The sponsor must conduct a follow-up visit when it detects another block claim, and must conduct follow-up visits every time it detects a block claim for which there is no legitimate reason, even if it is the same provider.*
31. If a block claim is not validated, at what point do we have to make it a concern, serious deficiency, or do a parent survey? **A.** *Right away, you must validate before paying.*
32. What takes priority, a block claim that you have already seen for a visit that month (that was not validated), or a provider who has not been seen in 4 months? **A.** *This takes a fine balance of your time. Remember that a provider that needs a regular visit may be seen within 6 months not always 4 months.*
33. What takes priority, a block claim that is not due for a visit yet, or a provider who has not been seen in 4 months? **A.** *See # 31 above.*
34. Once a block claim is validated, can we do visit averaging on that provider? **A.** *No; only providers with two unannounced visits in which there were “no serious problems” may be averaged.*
35. If a provider block claims one month, but not the next month, do we still have to see him/her to validate the block claim? **A.** *Yes.*
36. If a block claim cannot be validated at the visit, and then the provider is not block claiming the next month, do we have to see him/her again? **A.** *Yes. Again, sponsors must establish if the provider has a legitimate reason to block claim within 60 days. If the sponsor cannot validate the claim through records or parent surveys, the sponsor must disallow the meals and declare the provider seriously deficient. If the sponsor cannot validate a claim and establish that a provider has a legitimate reason to block claim, the sponsor must conduct a follow-up visit when it detects another block claim, and must conduct follow-up visits every time it detects a block claim for which there is no legitimate reason, even if it is the same provider.*
37. If the provider has two different meal times (for shifts and/or school runs), we will not see all of the children the provider is block claiming at one time. What do we do? If one or more of the children ate and left for school, can you still validate the claim if you do not see them? **A.** *Yes (see # 12 above).*
38. If providers claim one or two children for only breakfast, dinner, or evening snack, and they live far away (Yuba City, Galt, etc.), do we still have to see that particular meal to validate the block claim? If we see the same number of children earlier or later in the day, can we validate the block claim? **A.** *No and Yes; you may visit between meals or different meals to validate the claim (see # 12 above).*
39. If providers were seen for a scheduled visit, but then they had a block claim the next month, can we validate the block claim based on the scheduled visit (assuming the same number of children were seen)? If we cannot validate it, when do we go back? **A.** *You cannot validate a block claim before it happens. We asked USDA to research this. USDA WRO Bulletin 05-10 allowed a one-time-only pre-validation review in August & September 2005. We have asked whether*

that provision can be extended to any two month period.

40. Can we validate a block claim between meal times? **A.** Yes.
41. If providers were seen unannounced a month or two before they appeared on the block claim list, can we use that visit to validate the block claim, or do we have to go back within 60 days? **A.** See # 38 above; USDA researching the answer.
42. Since block claims have to be seen within 60 days, when does the 60 days start? **A.** When you detect the block claim.

In the discussions that went along with this process, not captured in their entirety here, a best practice was shared. When you send out the enrollment forms to parents mention in the cover letter that they may be surveyed sometime during the year and their cooperation is requested.

5-Day Reconciliation

By the time we got to 5-day reconciliation the day was getting long so we decided to try to approach the issue differently. Rather than answer each question USDA and NSD representatives gave the following explanation:

A five-day reconciliation must be completed on every review. Janice Hunt stated that sponsors must compare, for any 5 consecutive days in the current month (or if suspicious the prior month), information contained on enrollment forms to attendance and meal counts – per child, per meal, per day for 5 days. If there is a discrepancy get an explanation. For instance, if Johnny's enrollment form indicates that he attends only Monday through Thursday and the provider is claiming Johnny on Friday you will need to determine if there was a claiming error or document the reason for the difference (such as mom had a change in schedule and had to work Friday this week). Sponsors need to include a section on their site monitoring report or a separate form for the reconciliation. Document on it the number of children for each meal, each day and a comment section. NSD will be providing a sample form which sponsors may follow.

Sponsors using software such as Minute Menu had concerns regarding counting bubbles. They say the software compares the meals claimed to the enrollment form and notes errors for the sponsor to follow up on. They wondered if that was sufficient. NSD said that it was and asked that the reconciliation form be attached to the site monitoring report.

PLEASE

RENEW

YOUR

MEMBERSHIP

TODAY

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR
THE NEXT TWO ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS**

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2006, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Ingalls Auditorium/ Edison Center at East Los Angeles College

1301 Avenida Cesar Chavez, Monterey Park, CA 91754

TRAINING TOPIC: Block Claiming and Five-Day Reconciliation

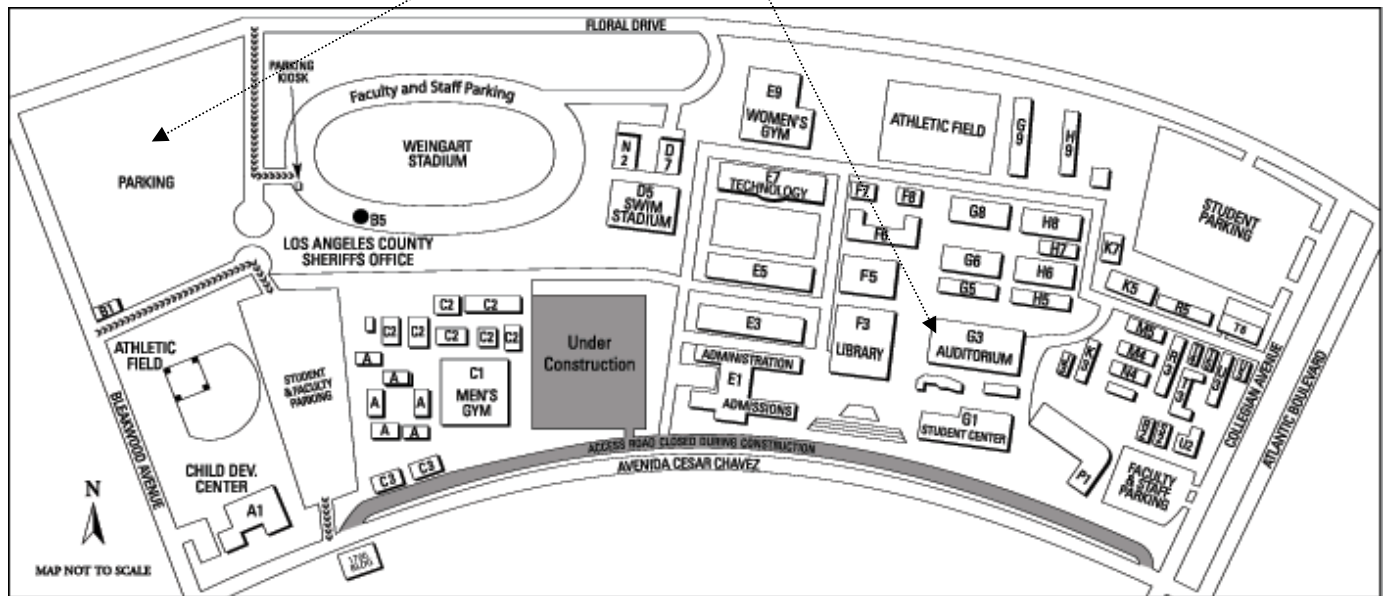
LODGING INFORMATION:

- *Hilton Garden Inn Montebello*, 801 Via San Clemente, Montebello, CA 90640, 323-724-5900

PARKING: Parking for the Roundtable meeting will be at the Weingart Stadium lot off Floral Dr. Get a free parking permit at the kiosk. Wear comfortable shoes as it is a bit of a walk to the auditorium from this parking lot. Find a campus map at www.elac.edu/general/campus_map.htm.

The **Advisory Committee Meeting** is at the Child Development Center on the corner of Cesar Chavez and Bleakwood Ave., Wednesday, March 15, 10:00 AM.

For more information contact Marcia Cagigas at 323-415-5383



THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2006, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM
USDA Western Regional Office
550 Kearny Street, Room 400, San Francisco, CA 94108

TRAINING TOPIC: Sponsor Monitoring: Rules, Expectations & Reality.

LODGING INFORMATION (RESERVE EARLY): All these hotels are relatively near Union Square or USDA (You should be able to walk). All are at least 2-3 diamonds in AAA and reasonably priced for San Francisco (beginning prices less than \$150).

- *York Hotel*, 940 Sutter St., 415-885-6800.
- *Petite Auberge*, 863 Bush St., 415-928-6000.
- *Hotel Vintage Court*, 650 Bush St., 415-392-4666.
- *Hotel Beresford*, 635 Sutter St., 800-533-6533.
- *Cartwright Hotel*, 524 Sutter St., 415-421-2865.
- *Chancellor Hotel*, 433 Powell St., 415-362-2004.
- *Beresford Arms*, 701 Post St., 415-673-2600.
- *King George Hotel*, 334 Mason St., 415-781-5050.
- *Hilton San Francisco*. 333 O'Farrell St., 415-771-1400

PARKING & DIRECTIONS - The USDA Regional Office is on Kearny Street between California and Sacramento Streets. *There is no nearby inexpensive parking.* Your best bet is to park at the city garage on Sutter Street @ Stockton or the garage at Sutter @ Grant; parking will be \$12-20 per day (Inexpensive parking is available south of Market street down near the Freeway between 2nd and 5th Streets, but it's a good long walk). To walk to USDA from the Sutter Street garages, proceed down Sutter (east) 2 blocks to Kearny, turn left (north) and go 3 blocks to 550 Kearny (If you have never driven into San Francisco, call Ed). Public transportation is the way to go! **BART** is very easy. For USDA, get off at the *Montgomery Street* station; it is one block east of Kearny on Market Street @ Montgomery. From the BART station proceed north on Montgomery to California Street, turn left one block to Kearny and right to the office. Or take CalTrain from San Jose or the Peninsula; the station is a good walk so take a #30 Muni Bus to get to USDA's office.

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION: From SFO take Super Shuttle (415-558-8500) for \$15 right to USDA. It's available at the baggage claim level in front of United and US Air. They come by pretty regularly so you shouldn't have to call. Reserve a return ride from your hotel 24 hrs. in advance. Welcome to the big city!

The **Advisory Committee Meeting** is at the same location, Wednesday, May 17 at 10:00 AM.

For more information contact Ed Mattson at (530) 677-9410