Setting the Course for Healthier Food Retail: Grocery and Convenience Stores

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MDH Minnesota Department *of* Health

Working Together for Better Health

Goals for session today:

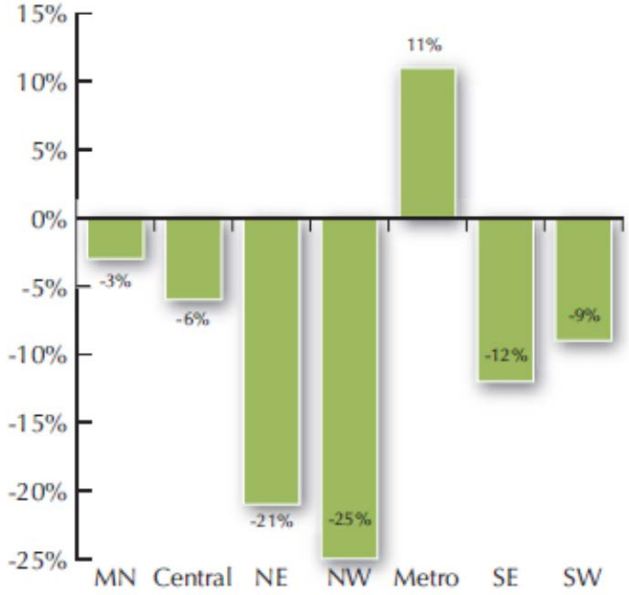
- **Demystify the complexities of working with food stores**
- **Build understanding and capacity for work with retail partners**
- **Discuss potential areas for collective impact in Minnesota**

Healthy Food Retail: Aligns with Minnesota Food Charter Strategies

- **"Provide support to stores, restaurants, and other places that serve and sell food to limit the number of unhealthy options and improve the availability of affordable, healthy foods including foods familiar to people of many ethnicities" p.13**

Minnesota FOOD CHARTER For Our Healthy Future

Rural Need



The change in the number of grocery stores by region between 2000 and 2013.
Data: DEED, QCEW

Staples, Minnesota

Marlboro
$44
$7.65
1
pepsi
Coca-Cola
enjoy
ice cold
$7.75
$7.75
$7.75
80

Why Corner/Convenience Stores?

- Present in most communities
- Increased healthy food sales can stimulate local economies
- Little availability of healthy choices

Good Food Access Fund

- **Increase access to nutritious foods in underserved communities across Minnesota**
- **Promote economic development**
  - Small business development
  - Job creation
- **Improve health equity**

Good Food ACCESS FUND

Minnesotans for Healthy Kids Coalition

PSE Levers

- **Laws—food safety, licensing**
- **Incentives**
  - "Healthy Store" programs
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—"food stamps"); Women, Infants, Children (WIC)
  - Tax breaks, access to funding
- **Distributor/manufacturer influence**
- **(Perceived) customer demand**

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SNAPSHOT: minimum stocking requirements

4 staple food categories:

- Meat, poultry, fish
- Bread or cereals
- Vegetables or fruits
- Dairy products

At least 50% of retail sales must come from staple foods, OR

Must stock at least 3 types of items in each category AND

Must stock perishable (frozen or fresh) foods in at least 2 categories

7 C.F.R. section 278.1

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SNAPSHOT:

- At least 7 types from each staple food category (was 3) (Congress)
- At least 3 categories must include perishable items (was 2) (Congress)
- Require at least 6 stocking units for each type of food (USDA)

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SNAP SHOT:

Narrows the definition of “staple food”

- No commercially processed foods and prepared mixtures with multiple ingredients that don’t represent a single staple food category—yogurt vs. pizza
- No accessory foods--snacks or desserts

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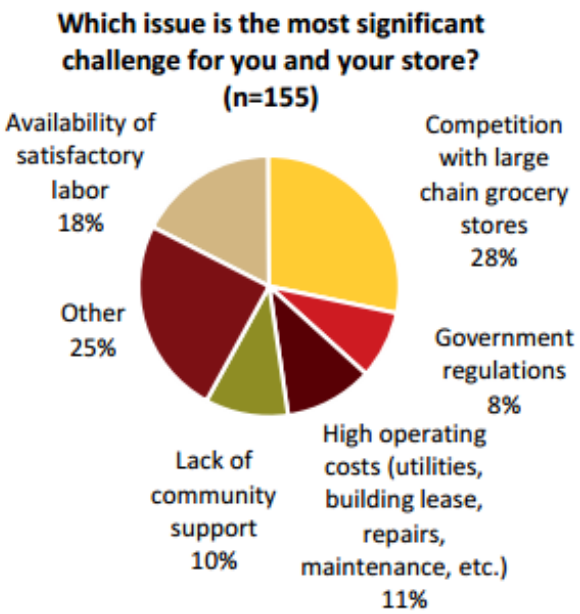
Rural Challenges

How much of a challenge are each of the following issues for your store?		
ISSUE	MAJOR OR MINOR CHALLENGE	NOT A CHALLENGE
COMPETITION WITH LARGE CHAIN GROCERY STORES (N=175)	97%	3%
HIGH OPERATING COSTS (UTILITIES, BUILDING LEASE, REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE, ETC.) (N=175)	95%	5%
NARROW PROFIT MARGINS (N=174)	94%	6%
GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS (N=174)	88%	12%
TAXES (N=172)	87%	13%
AVAILABILITY OF SATISFACTORY LABOR (N=175)	85%	15%
LOW SALES VOLUME (N=174)	84%	16%



Note. "Other" includes several issues cited by less than 5% of respondents.

http://www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/statewide/rural-grocery-stores/

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Promising Approaches

- Collect information to understand the landscape
- Raise the bar
- Support with technical assistance
- Build customer demand

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Rice County SHIP

Healthy Corner Stores

Minnesota Department *of* Health

How It Works

- **Identify if you have the capacity to complete the assessments**
  - Training/Assessing/Analyzing = Do
  - High capacity interns are great ☺

Opportunities Identified

- **Why would the corner store want to add healthier options?**
  - $$$
  - Improved perception and look
  - Each store is different – Ask!

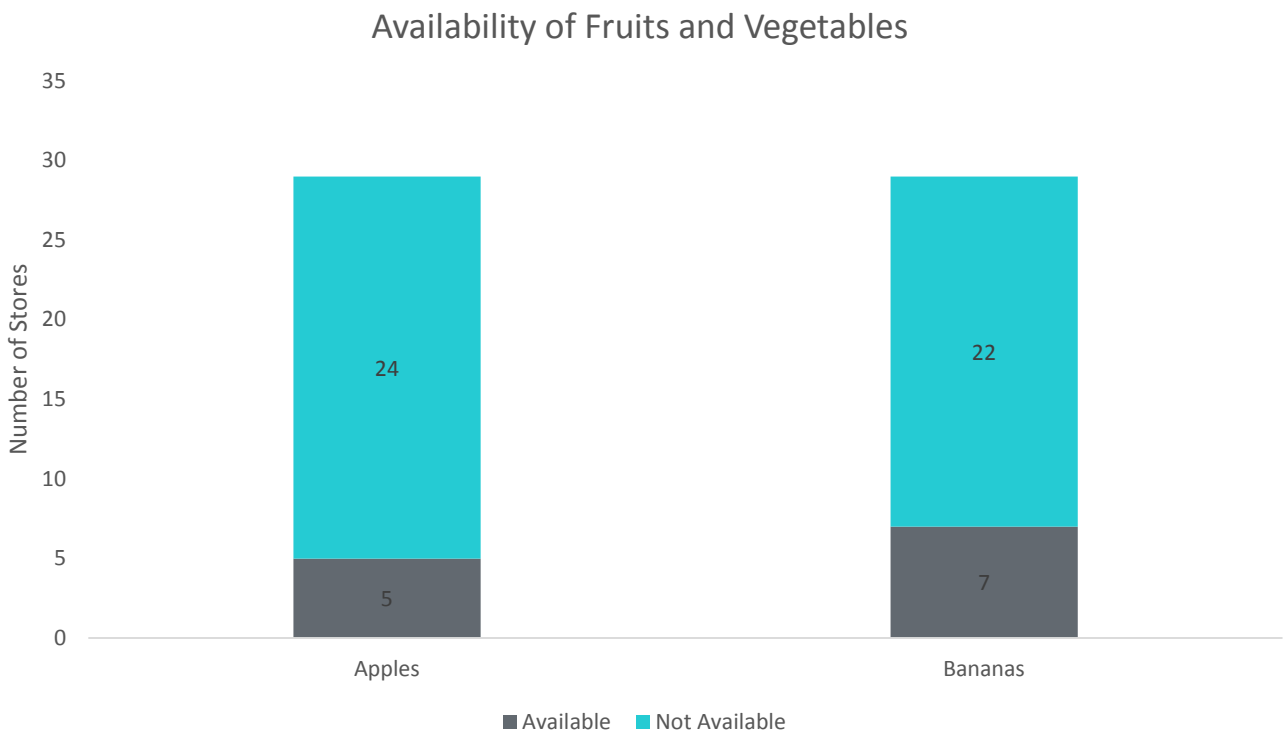
Opportunities Identified

- **Point of Purchase signs**

Opportunities Identified

- **WIC and SNAP signage**
- **0% had signs**

Opportunities Identified



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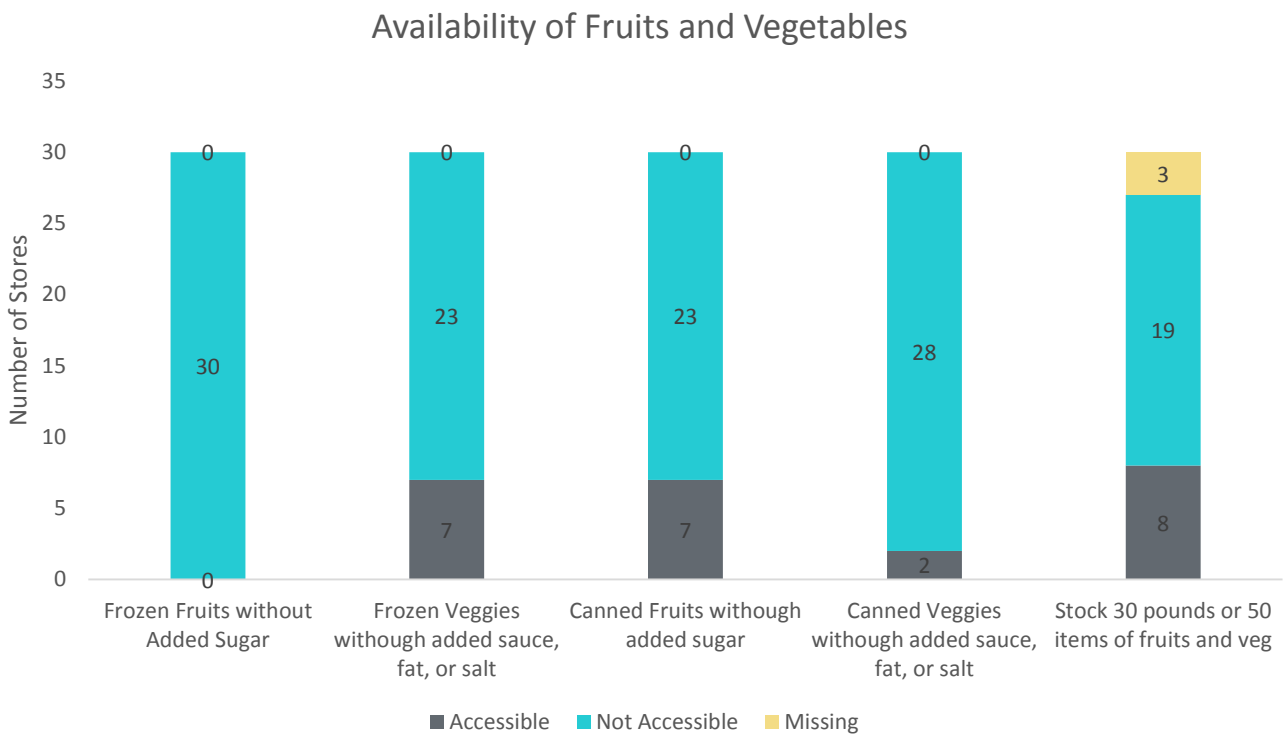

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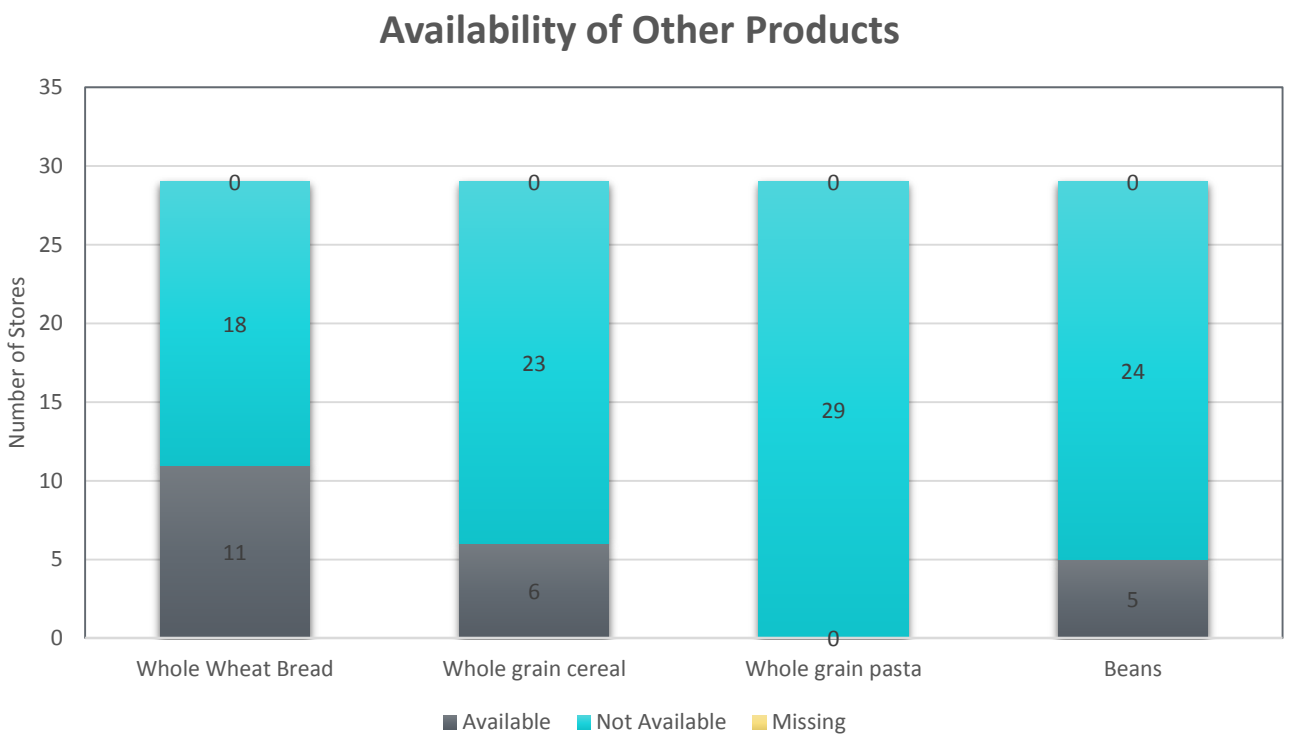

Planning The Next Steps

- **Write Healthy Corner Stores work into the year 2 work plan**
- **Budget for time and mini grants**
- **This work might take all of SHIP 4 to be implemented**

Eat Well!

Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Faribault & Martin Counties

Statewide Health Improvement Program SHIP

HEALTH REFORM

FMW SHIP

Faribault, Martin & Watonwan Counties

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Eat Well! Healthy Corner Store Initiative

- **Voluntary program between public health and corner/convenience stores**
- **6 steps to a healthy store**
  - Complete store assessment
  - Create a store action plan
  - Identify display and labeling options
  - Encourage sales of healthier foods through produce placement
  - Increase healthy food offerings
  - Free training on produce purchasing, handling & marketing

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Incentives to Participate

- **Free consultation with dietitian to analyze current food options and develop new options**
- **Assistance with produce display and store layout**
- **Free display cases-including refrigerated display**
- **Signs and baskets for produce**
- **Training for proper produce handling**
- **Stipend on first produce order**
- **Promotion and kick-off to highlight store improvements**
- **Sales tracking assistance**

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Finding Partners

- **Original Goal: 5 sites**
- **Started with a mass mailing to all corner stores in our geographical area**
- **Pound the pavement!**
- **LOCAL=SUCCESS**
- **Execute contract with sites**
- **Work with sites to implement action plans**
- **Media & Advertising!**

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Local Partners

- **Shell-Fairmont**
- **Juba's Convenience Store- Blue Earth**
- **Poppe's Corner Store- Fairmont**
- **Kiester Market- Kiester**
- **Bud's Corner Store- Bricelyn**

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Budget & Resources

- **$25,000 UCARE Foundation Grant to support SHIP Healthy Eating Work with Healthy Corner Store Grant**
- **Up to $3,000 mini-grant contract per store site**
- **Contracting with Jennifer Wood – Dietitian from Dietitian on Wheels**
- **Staff time**

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Business Matters

What matters to businesses is the bottom line

No profits means no business.

Why should a retailer care about promoting healthy products in their store?

Use Consumer Trends

- **40% of Americans say they actively seek information about nutrition and healthful eating** ***Nutrition and You: Trends 2008, American Dietetic Association***
- **Changing the types and amount of food remain top priority for 76% of American who are trying to improve their diet** **2010 Food &** ***Health Survey, International Food Information Council Foundation***
- **Resource for trends IFIC.org or foodinsight.org**

What is healthy?

- **Nutrient Dense**
  - vs. low calorie & fat
- **Local**
  - 10 miles, Midwest, USA
- **Sustainable**
- **Mindful eating vs. diet**
- **Paleo or Primal**
  - fat good, carbs bad
  - Atkins, South Beach
- **Balanced nutrition**
- **Organic**
- **Whole foods**
- **Non GMO**
- **Non irradiated food**
- **Gluten-free**

2012 Food & Health Survey, IFIC

- **Most Americans (52%) have concluded that figuring out their income taxes is easier than knowing what they should and shouldn't eat to be healthier!**

Then you have the facts…

- **The truth: their customers may not know how to cook! Many young people…**
  - Never peeled an apple
  - Didn’t know a peach has a pit
- **The majority of people do not know what they are having for dinner at 4 p.m.!**

- **Let’s start where they are**

Your bottom line

- **Tell the business owner how your going to improve their bottom line**
- **Give them plenty of SIMPLE options to choose from**
- **No doesn’t always mean no – it means they see an obstacle. Help them overcome it.**

Panel Discussion

Feedback

- **What do you need to support your efforts to increase access to and selection of healthy foods in your community retail setting?**
- **Would collective guidelines, efforts and tools enhance your work?**

Thank you!