

**Western MCH Nutrition Leadership Network
University of California, Los Angeles
Public Health Nutrition Leadership Training
MCHB #T79MC00013**

February 23, 2011

Dear Network Member,

The UCLA MCH Nutrition Leadership Training program (“UCLA Partners”) is pleased to invite you to the annual Western MCH Nutrition Leadership Network (NLN) meeting to be held March 31 and April 1, 2011, in Los Angeles, CA. Those of you who are long-term participants will recognize the Marina del Rey Hotel as the site of a couple of our past meetings. It is a delightful small hotel located right on the water. This year we will be by ourselves again for the first time in awhile and are looking forward to having a smaller group. In addition to that change, we will be switching the usual sequence of the days in order to accommodate our invited speakers. However, the usual, highly-valued, time for sharing among network members from nutrition programs in each of 13 western states will still be held on the afternoon and evening of the first day.

Thursday, March 31, 2011, will be our Leadership Day. The facilitator will be Kris Risley, from the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago who heads their Leadership Program. The UCLA Partners and trainees were privileged to meet Kris last Spring at an All-Grantee workshop in Washington DC and we are excited that she is able to spend some time with the Network. We will be asking you to read a book entitled *Strengths-Based Leadership*, by Tom Rath and Barrie Conchie prior to the session, and there will be a self-assessment to help you identify your own strengths.

The Leadership session will end in the early afternoon on Thursday, at which time we will begin the “networking” portion of our meeting. As usual, this will be your opportunity to share the exciting things going on in your states with the rest of the Network. As you have done in the past, **please send an abstract of the topic/program** you would like to share so that we can better organize our time. A template with instructions/specifications will be sent soon. This year we again plan to do some “thinking out loud” about how you might incorporate ideas from the earlier sessions into your programs at home as a way to stimulate some brainstorming that could benefit all of us. In addition, we will update you on our website, ask for your feedback and to help us with how we can best facilitate on-going web-based networking capabilities for the NLN.

The agenda for Friday is entitled “*Life Course Perspective, Nutrition and Public Health Practice*” and will be focused on the “Life Course Perspective”, the exciting new holistic way to look at the biologic and environmental influences on health over the lifespan which is guiding the new 5 year Strategic Plan currently being formulated by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA. We will have a panel of experts presenting in the morning, including Michael Lu, MD, MPH, from the Child and Family Health Program, UCLA School of Public Health, Cherie Pies, DrPH, MSW, Director of the MCH Training Program at UC Berkeley and Cindy Harding, MPH, Director of the Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Program, LA County Department of Health. In the afternoon, Gail Harrison, PhD (UCLA SPH) and Denise Gee, MPH, RD (Public Health Foundation Enterprise WIC) will bring the focus to public health nutrition research and practice.

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We have identified the following objectives for the day:

1. Understand the foundations of the Life Course Perspective of MCH and how it relates to the central role nutrition plays at critical moments of the lifespan, especially related to pre and interconception care and early development.
2. Identify the use of the theory in practical ways in public health settings to increase the potential for vulnerable MCH populations to reach their optimal development.
3. Discuss implications for policy decisions related to public health nutrition at the local, state and national levels.
4. Identify opportunities for synergy (and funding?) within and among states.
5. Explore use of the Life Course Research Network (based at UCLA) to disseminate and distribute modules for training.

We look forward to an informative and collaborative time together and value your ongoing participation in the Network. Nutritionists from 13 states (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY) have been invited to the meeting. We also hope to include, as we have done in past years, representatives from tribal organizations.

As usual, the travel expenses will be covered by the training grant. It is being sent, in some cases, to those you have already designated as your state representative based on the save-the-date email sent last month. As usual, in some cases, depending on the number of responses, we will be able to support travel for more than one person from a state, so this letter is being sent to all identified participants in each state even though all may not be able to be supported. If you plan to attend March 31st and April 1st, **please return the attached “travel and reimbursement request form” immediately (by February 18th)** so that we can reserve space at the hotel. Your contact at UCLA for any questions you have regarding the logistics will be Susan Silah, our Project Manager.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

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