

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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WIC Initiatives Highlight *National Nutrition Month* *'Public Awareness Initiatives Include Open House'*

Oneida County's *Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program*, in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension's *Eat Smart New York (ESNY)*, has planned a variety of initiatives designed to raise public awareness of the role of proper nutrition in maintaining good health, Dr. Gayle Jones, Director of Health announced today.

"Eat Smart New York and the WIC program share the common goal of providing both supplemental assistance and education on the critical nature of proper nutrition and healthy eating habits to insure growth and development throughout our lives," Jones said.

The activities will highlight *National Nutrition Month* and include several events open to the public throughout the month of March. On **Thursday, March 10th** WIC and ESNY will participate in a wellness fair sponsored by Donovan Middle School from **2:30 to 4:30 PM**. The fair is intended for students, parents and faculty and will provide a healthy snack along with educational materials on the WIC and ESNY programs.

On **Thursday, March 17th** WIC and ESNY invites the public to attend an 'Open House' at the Cornell Cooperative Extension located at 121 Second Street in Oriskany from **10am to 2pm**. Games and exercises are planned and a healthy snack will be served.

The Rome Y will team with WIC and *Eat Smart New York* on **Friday, March 18th** from **12 noon to 2pm** in Rome in presenting an educational program on the benefits of proper nutrition and ways working families can stretch their food budgets.

During the last week of February, a WIC informational flyer and a bread pudding recipe were mailed to all day care providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food (CACFP) Program in a three county area. Recipients were asked to provide their feedback by returning an attached questionnaire. Respondents will be eligible to win one of five grocery gift cards in a drawing to be held during *National Nutrition Month*.

Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said the *National Nutrition Month* activities are a 'good fit' with other health initiatives he has spearheaded through the health department.

"A goal of ours has been to make as many people aware of the benefits of proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle as we possibly can. These initiatives represent the types of outreach we have been focusing on to accomplish that goal, and I commend all parties involved for their efforts," Picente said.

For more information on the WIC or the *Eat Smart New York* programs call the Utica WIC office at 798-5066 or visit the Health Department's web site at ocgov.net.

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