



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Rachel Daeger, SNEB
Phone: (317) 328 – 4627
Email: rdaeger@sneb.org

Amy Saxe-Custack PhD, MPH, RDN to Receive 2022 Advisory Committee on Public Policy Health Promotion Policy Award on behalf of Flint Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 1, 2022) Each year, the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) recognizes individuals or groups who have significantly contributed to creating and/or implementing policies or policy-based changes that support and positively impact the food and physical activity environment. The 2022 recipient of the ACPP Health Promotion Policy Award is Flint Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (FFVPP). FFVPP was developed to improve healthy food access and diet quality in low-income youth while mitigating effects of a devastating lead-in-water crisis in Flint, Michigan

Initially, nutrition prescription programs were largely focused on adults with chronic diseases. Dr. Saxe-Custack understood the value of primary prevention and the foundational role of healthy nutrition in childhood. In 2015 the Hurley Children’s Clinic, the largest pediatric clinic in Flint, moved from a hospital-based clinic to the second floor of a year-round farmers’ market in order to address overwhelming food insecurity. Dr. Saxe-Custack saw this as an opportunity to develop a pilot program that was first-of-its-kind and afforded a novel opportunity to improve nutrition education, access, intake, and affordability.

The FFVPP program launched in 2016 with parent comments including, “We experiment with different vegetables, so we’re eating healthier, and the prescriptions help on cost,” and “It is really fun to walk through the different stands at the Farmers’ Market, and you can taste a difference.” Within a few short years, FFVPP expanded from one pediatric clinic to three, and the prescription value increased to \$15. The published qualitative and quantitative research revealed positive impacts on individual and household food security, nutrition behaviors, and food intake. This program is culturally adapted and adaptable despite the initial focus in Flint, Michigan, the program is growing and being expanded to prenatal patients and many similar programs nationally.

“Dr. Saxe-Custack’s impact includes tens of thousands of nutrition prescriptions, healthier kids and families, and a multiplicative ripple effect across the state and nation,” said Mona Hanna-Attisha MD, MPH, FAAP. In 2018, United States Senator Debbie Stabenow was “inspired” by Dr. Saxe-Custack’s novel nutrition work in Flint and included a national USDA nutrition prescription program in the US Farm Bill.

In thinking about how this program can be adapted to future health emergencies, Dr. Saxe-Custack writes, “The potential role of nutrition in altering susceptibility to lead exposure and toxicity has long been recognized, with evidence to support that children’s underlying nutritional

deficiencies and hunger are associated with elevated lead levels. As increasing numbers of cities across the country struggle with similar public health disasters that have serious health and nutrition consequences for children, there is an increasing need to address persistent barriers, such as food insecurity and poor access to healthy foods, which exacerbate the negative impacts of these disasters. The FFVPP is one important program that works to do just that.”

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) represents the unique professional interests of nutrition educators worldwide. The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior advances food and nutrition education research, practice, and policy that promote equity and support public and planetary health and has a vision of people worldwide empowered by food and nutrition education to change behavior, food systems, and policy.