

**From:** Pitts, Ted  
**To:** Veldran, Katherine <KatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov>  
**Date:** 9/5/2013 1:01:11 PM  
**Subject:** FW: DHEC Food Stamp plan (WLTX))

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**From:** lillian.b.koller@gmail.com [mailto:lillian.b.koller@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 05, 2013 11:45 AM  
**To:** Baker, Josh; Pitts, Ted; Stirling, Bryan; Christian Soura  
**Subject:** Fw: DHEC Food Stamp plan (WLTX))

FYI, see clarifying email string below. Thanks. Lillian  
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

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**From:** Brad Leake <bradleake@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Thu, 5 Sep 2013 11:26:51 -0400  
**To:** <lillian.b.koller@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Fw: DHEC Food Stamp plan (WLTX))

Correct. Their RFI says "This notice requests information from any and all interested parties on opportunities to enhance retailer definitions and requirements in a manner that improves access to healthy food choices for SNAP participants..."

On Thu, Sep 5, 2013 at 10:45 AM, <lillian.b.koller@gmail.com> wrote:  
What's this? I don't think the USDA is asking for input on restricting what SNAP recipients can purchase. Rather, the USDA is asking for input on what SNAP retailers should be required to offer in their stores for SNAP recipients to have more choices that include healthy foods. Am I right or wrong?  
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

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**From:** "Matheus, Marilyn" <Marilyn.Matheus@dss.sc.gov>  
**Date:** Thu, 5 Sep 2013 14:38:57 +0000  
**To:** lillian.b.koller@gmail.com<lillian.b.koller@gmail.com>; Stillinger, Linda<Linda.Stillinger@dss.sc.gov>; Leake, Bradley<Brad.Leake@dss.sc.gov>  
**Cc:** Koller, Lillian<Lillian.B.Koller@dss.sc.gov>  
**Subject:** DHEC Food Stamp plan (WLTX))

<http://www.wltx.com/news/story.aspx?storyid=248410>

## USDA Asking SC for Input on Limiting What Food Stamps Can Buy

7:47 PM, Sep 4, 2013 |

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**By Robert Kittle**

For the first time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking states for input on possibly limiting what food items can be bought using food stamps, so South Carolina has sent its findings from recent public hearings around the state.

"This is huge," says Catherine Templeton, director of South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control. "We're the only state that's had public hearings. We've been pushing on the USDA."

DHEC's recommendation is to limit what can be bought using food stamps to meats, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and dairy products. Templeton says those are the same limits for the federal Women, Infants and Children, or WIC, food program. Food stamps could not be used to buy candy, cookies, cakes, or sugary drinks.

In her letter to the USDA summarizing DHEC's findings from its public hearings, she says South Carolina has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest obesity rate in the nation, and it has 878,000 people on food stamps. The food stamp program is officially known as SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

She says reducing the state's obesity problem would reduce health care costs, citing a recent report by Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that estimates the state could save \$9.3 billion by 2030 by reducing the average body mass index in the state by five percent.

"Simply put: obesity kills the most South Carolinians, makes the most sick, and would save us the most money in treatment if prevented," she writes in her summary letter to the USDA.

But Sue Berkowitz, director of the Appleseed Legal Justice Center in Columbia, an advocate for low-income families, says, "Not all people who are obese are on SNAP, so to target one particular population because they're vulnerable and easy to target is probably not a way to go in looking at how to develop public policy."

She says limiting what foods could be bought using SNAP would be a logistical problem at grocery checkouts.

"Whole grains. Does that mean you can't get pasta? Does that mean brown rice, not white rice? I mean, there's a lot of decisions that have to go into that," she says. "Does dairy mean ice cream? Does dairy only mean cottage cheese? Does fruit yogurt count? Does only low-fat yogurt count?"

Templeton says the waiver the state is seeking to be able to limit SNAP purchases is about good health and common sense. Her letter concludes, "... nearly half of SNAP recipients are children. As

policy makers, we have a responsibility to those children to ensure their benefits deliver maximum nutrition. A SNAP waiver isn't about limiting choice-it is about connecting word and deed. As you know, paying lip service to nutrition and looking the other way when SNAP dollars buy junk food won't get us anywhere."

There's no word on when the USDA might make a decision, but Templeton thinks the fact that the agency is asking for input is a good sign. "I think once you undertake to listen to what people have to say, you have to respond, and so I think it's exponentially more likely that there will be a response," she says.

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