Blueprint research, feedback identifies non-working children as key segment

The draft Updated National Action Plan for Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention – also known as “Blueprint for Protecting Children in Agriculture” – was posted online for five weeks, and the recently-concluded feedback period yielded valuable recommendations that are being considered by the Blueprint core team.

A theme has emerged from the feedback and research: more attention should be paid to non-working children, who account for more than half of all childhood agricultural injuries.

“We need to address the limited child care options in rural areas,” said Barbara Lee, Ph.D., director of the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety.

Dr. Lee gave a preliminary Blueprint status report at the June 2011 meeting of the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (formerly NIFS).

The final Blueprint document, to be published this winter, will serve as the foundation upon which strategies and priorities will be set for the next decade.

“We envision agribusiness spelling out in its company policies a greater role in minimizing children’s adverse exposures, and increasing funds for programs and services,” Dr. Lee said. A model of child care for farm workers is the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (www.rcma.org) in Florida. RCMA partners with a number of growers to provide safe places for children while parents work in the fields. RCMA is the largest non-profit child-care provider in Florida.

The Blueprint initiative is being co-directed by Susan Gallagher, M.P.H., of Tufts University, and Dr. Lee, with assistance from National Children’s Center Deputy Director Barbara Marlenga, Ph.D. The Blueprint project is part of the National Children’s Center’s grant, funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

The Blueprint is the latest in a series of guiding documents from the National Children’s Center that includes the National Action Plan (1996) and Updated National Action Plan from the 2001 Summit. It will provide background, injury trends, evidence from evaluated interventions, photographs, and priorities for leadership, data, research, public policy, organizational policy, interventions, and knowledge mobilization.

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Mini-grant funds project with Florida migrant association

The National Children’s Center is partnering with Redlands Christian Migrant Association (www.rcma.org) and the Florida Department of Agriculture to promote pesticide safety. Through a “mini-grant” from the National Children’s Center, RCMA is installing decontamination stations at 15 centers and conducting staff and parent training about ways to minimize their children’s exposure to pesticides. Leading the project for the National Children’s Center is Amy K. Liebman, M.P.A., the Center’s formal consultant on migrant and immigrant issues through a partnership with Migrant Clinicians Network.

Redlands Christian Migrant Association was founded in 1965 by Mennonite Church volunteers in the Redlands farming area of southern Miami-Dade County to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children while their parents worked in the fields. In 2009-2010 RCMA served nearly 8,200 children in 87 centers and two charter schools in 21 Florida counties. RCMA is funded by local, state and federal grants, as well as the generosity of the United Way, agribusiness and other corporations, community, foundations and individuals.

Study examines economic impact of injuries

“Impact of youth injuries on the uninsured farm family’s economic viability,” by Eduard Zaloshnja, Ph.D., and Ted Miller, Ph.D., has been published in the International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion (epub ahead of print, August 2011). Zaloshnja and Miller are with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, Center for Public Health Improvement and Innovation, Calverton, Maryland. They compared farm profits with costs of farm youth injuries. They built profit models for two types of farms, dairy and soybean farms. Then they estimated the cost impact of farm youth injuries of different levels of severity on a farm family with no health insurance. A severe child injury that requires at least 10 days of hospitalization would cost almost equal to the operating profit of the average dairy farm with no health insurance and would turn the operating profit of the average soybean farm into a severe loss of $99,499. This paper follows a related article, “Incidence and cost of nonfatal farm youth injury, United States, 2001-2006,” by Zaloshnja, Miller and Barbara Lee, Ph.D., (J Agromedicine. 2011;16(1):6-18.)

CASN meets in Boise

Members of the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network (CASN) held their annual in-person meeting on June 27, 2011, in Boise, Idaho, during the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health conference. A record 40 individuals participated. “The Blueprint for Protecting Children in Agriculture: Updated Action Plan,” was discussed at length, and attendees gave updates on their organizations’ activities. For more information, go to www.childagsafety.org.
The U.S. Department of Labor is proposing revisions to child labor regulations that will strengthen the safety requirements for young workers employed in agriculture and related fields. You are invited to provide comments on this important proposal. The 60-day comment period ends November 1.

The National Children’s Center has published a fact sheet that compares present agricultural rules with the proposed revisions. It was authored by Mary E. Miller, R.N., M.N., child labor/young worker specialist, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. The fact sheet, and instructions for giving feedback via the Federal Register, are available at www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs.

Schedule of upcoming events

October 20 – 22, 2011
24th Annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum
West Palm Beach, FL, www.nchca.org

October 29 – November 2, 2011
American Public Health Association
Washington, DC, http://www.apha.org/meetings/contact

October 30 – November 4, 2011
National Safety Council Congress & Expo

November 10 – 12, 2011
21st Annual Midwest Stream Farmworker Health Forum
Albuquerque, NM, www.ncfh.org

November 15, 2011
Webinar: Can You Hear Me? An Introduction to Hearing Loss Prevention in Agriculture. Presented by Janet Ehlers and Pamela Graydon. For information, contact Jose Lainez at jlainez@cdc.gov

November 16 – 17, 2011
2011 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Forum
Des Moines, IA, http://cph.uiowa.edu/icash/events/MRASH/2011/

November 16-18, 2011
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association annual conference
Vancouver, BC, www.casa-acsa.ca

December 7-8, 2011
Rural Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference
Daytona Beach, FL, http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/mm

January 26, 2012
Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America workshop and annual meeting, Washington, DC, www.ashca.com

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