

June 25, 2002

Ministry of Human Resources

## **CHANGES TO THE DIET PROGRAM**

### **BACKGROUND**

- Diet assistance is a monthly payment available for clients facing the expense of special diets.
- The ministry wants to ensure that diet funding goes to individuals who need the diet for a specific medical diagnosis or medical condition.

### **NEW POLICY**

- Diet assistance will continue to be available, but only for clients whose special dietary needs are linked to a specific medical diagnosis or condition.
- Clients with diabetes, cystic fibrosis and kidney disease may be eligible for diet assistance.
- Clients requesting funds for restricted sodium, gluten-free, and dysphagia diet supplements may be eligible if the benefits are recommended by a physician, dietician or nutritionist to aid a specific condition.
- Funding for high-protein diets will continue to be available for individuals who need additional nutritional support and have been diagnosed with:
  - Cancer – requiring nutritional support during radiation, chemotherapy or surgical cancer therapy;
  - Chronic inflammatory bowel disease;
  - Crohn's disease;
  - Ulcerative colitis;
  - HIV/AIDS, chronic bacterial infection and tuberculosis;
  - Hyperthyroidism;
  - Osteoporosis; or
  - Hepatitis B or hepatitis C.
- Nutritional supplement products may be provided, on a short term basis, to help a client recover from illness, if recommended by a physician.

## **WHO IS AFFECTED**

- BCEA clients who receive diet funding that is not linked to a specific disease or condition.
- Note: The diet program is separate from the Monthly Nutritional Supplement, announced in October 2001, to meet the needs of clients with chronic progressive deterioration with wasting symptoms. Individuals receiving the Monthly Nutritional Supplement will not be affected by changes to the diet program.

## **WHEN THE CHANGE WILL OCCUR**

- New applicants for diet assistance will have eligibility determined under the new criteria as of July 1, 2002.
- Existing recipients of diet assistance will have their eligibility reviewed when their current assistance term expires.
- Existing diet assistance recipients with no expiry date for their assistance, or an expiry date more than 12 months away, will have their eligibility reviewed under new criteria in July 2002.