

November 1, 2006

Dear Nutrition Program Participants,

On behalf of the entire Sweden Town Board, we would like to thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the change to the Nutrition Program at our October 24 meeting here at the Senior Center, at our Budget Public Hearing on October 24, and through letters, phone calls and visits to the Town Hall.

We took your concerns to a meeting with the County Office of the Aging and ABVI on Tuesday, October 31. We believe that those two agencies addressed the concerns professionally, comprehensively and satisfactorily. We would like to share some of the information with you in order to dispel the remaining misinformation and doubts that may be circulating among you.

1. You will not be served "boxed lunches." Lunches will arrive in serving pans that fit into our steam table. Your lunches will continue to be served on our own senior center dinnerware.
2. Your vegetables will not be over-cooked or mushy. In fact, your vegetables will be cooked at our senior center by our serving person. They will continue to be as freshly prepared in the new program as they are today.
3. ABVI is able to cater breakfast events, special dinner events and picnics when you wish to hold them.
4. Our senior center director will continue to hold the highest level of food safety certification allowing for flexibility in the use of the kitchen facilities.
5. The Office of the Aging will monitor the quality of the food, as it does today. During the period of transition from the old program to the new program, the Office of the Aging will be present on site more often than usual to help ensure a smooth, satisfactory transition.

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6. Don Witmeyer, Director of ABVI's Food Service, will meet with you before the change takes place to answer your detailed questions about his program. Our senior center director will make arrangements for that meeting to happen as soon as possible.
7. If there are legitimate complaints about the quality of lunches, our senior center director, the County Office of the Aging and ABVI will work closely with you to resolve those issues.

The Sweden Town Board realizes that change is difficult. Change is even more difficult when negative attitudes founded on misinformation are allowed to prevail. We hope that you will do as one of you suggested at the budget public hearing – give this change in the nutrition program a chance. Keep an open mind. Your continued participation is necessary to keep this program in place.

The Sweden Town Board has provided our seniors with the best facility in all of western New York. We will continue to provide you with this wonderful facility and a variety of programs and services to meet your needs. Thank you for recognizing that sometimes change is necessary in order for those programs and services to be delivered in the most cost effective manner possible.

Sincerely,

Nat O. Lester, III
Sweden Supervisor

Thomas F. Ferris
Sweden Councilperson