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#### **MASS. FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS FACE NEW SANITARY CODE REQUIREMENTS**

Amendments made to the state sanitary code on Wednesday clarify the language and procedures food establishments in Massachusetts must follow.

The Public Health Council approved the amendments after Michael Moore, director of the Food Protection Program at the Office of Health and Human Services, addressed the council, listing eight amendments to the sanitary code chapter on sanitation standards for food establishments.

The code should provide a definition to the term "cottage food" as baked goods, jams and jellies for sale directly to the consumer, he said. Clarifications should be made for the terms "food establishment," which should not include cooking classes, farm trucks or businesses that sell only unprocessed honey and other raw items, and "food employee," which should exempt those who only handle certain raw agricultural products. Lastly, shared kitchens and incubator operations, which provide smaller food retailers with kitchen access and equipment, should be grouped under the term "leased commercial kitchens," he said.

In requests to change procedure, Moore said the code's addressing of diseases that are transmissible through food should be consistent with the Department of Public Health's regulation for reportable diseases. Another amendment requires that the sale or service of wild mushrooms be in conformance with the department's outlines - the code had referenced a Conference for Food Protection's guidance document, which is currently under review at the federal level.

The last of the eight amendments to 105 CMR 590 requires the entirety of a food establishment's written procedures to be submitted to the local board of health for review. Written procedures must also be available for inspectors upon request. - Chris Triunfo/SHNS

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