

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION ON THE MARKETING OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES TO CHILDREN

Resolution Summary

America's current generation of young people are the most plugged in generation ever. The average young person lives in a home with more than three televisions, an Internet-connected computer and two video game consoles. More than two-thirds of school-age youth and a third of preschool-age children have televisions in their bedrooms. And 75 percent of adolescents have their own cell phones.

While all of this technology allows young people to access tremendous amounts of information quickly, not all of that information may be good for their health. One Kaiser Family Foundation study showed children ages 8-12 saw an average of 51 hours of food and drink ads on television each year. With children as young as 2-7 years old, they saw an average of almost 30 hours of food ads each year. Those ads usually are for candy, snacks, cereals and fast food – products that generally are high in sugar, fat and salt.

Even at school, children still are often exposed to high-fat, high-sugar foods that are either available for purchase or in advertising. There is little wonder that one third of America's youth are either overweight or obese. Children who are overweight or obese are at a much greater risk of carrying that additional weight into adulthood. They also stand a greater chance of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels – all of which put them at greater risk for heart disease.

This resolution seeks to encourage Congress to adopt stricter regulations about when and how food and beverages may be marketed to children and urges state boards of education to adopt stricter standards of what kinds of foods are available at schools.

Additional Resource Information

Leadership for Healthy Communities: "Food and Beverage Marketing to Children and Adolescents: What Changes are Needed to Promote Healthy Eating Habits?"

<http://65.181.142.130/images/stories/foodmarketingbrief.pdf>

Institute of Medicine: Childhood Obesity Prevention Page

<http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/51730.aspx>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Childhood Obesity Page

<http://www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/index.jsp>

CSG Management Directives

Management Directive #1: Support state efforts to improve the nutritional quality of food being served in schools and how food and beverages are being marketed to children.

Management Directive #2: CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's Web site and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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WHEREAS, one-third of America's young people are either overweight or obese;

WHEREAS, between 1999 and 2007, the number of high school students who ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables and drank three or more glasses of milk each day declined steadily;

WHEREAS, children and young adults live in a highly connected world with televisions, computers, game consoles and cell phones easily available to the majority of youth;

WHEREAS, children ages 8-12 see an average of 51 hours each year of television commercials for food and beverages;

WHEREAS, an analysis in 2005 found that 85 percent of food and drink brands children saw on television also had Web sites that targeted children, including ones that use "advergaming" to get their marketing messages out to young people with online games;

WHEREAS, although great strides have been made to remove unhealthful foods and beverages from schools, 71 percent of middle schools and 89 percent of high schools still allow students to buy snacks and drinks from vending machines or snack bars;

WHEREAS, there are few federal regulations to limit how and when marketing can be aimed at children and to a large extent, decisions about what can be sold in schools is left to the individual school administrator;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Council of State Governments urges states to work with their U.S. senators and representatives to encourage the creation of federal guidelines for how food and beverages may be marketed to children and urges state Boards of Education to adopt statewide standards for the types of food and beverages that may be sold to students at school.

Adopted this ____ day of November, 2009 at the CSG Annual Meeting in La Quinta, California.

Governor Joe Manchin III
2009 CSG President

Sen. Bart Davis
2009 CSG Chair