Public Responses in Los Angeles County: Improving the Beverage Environment

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Los Angeles County:

- 4,000 square miles
- 10 million residents
- 88 cities
- 81 schools districts
Substantial decline in sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among California’s children and adolescents

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Introduction: Few studies have looked at changes among risk factors that might help explain why childhood obesity prevalence in the US has leveled off in recent years. We present an analysis of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) that examines trends in childhood and adolescent obesity as well as trends in sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption.

Method: We compared 3 separate cross-sectional samples (2005, 2005, and 2007) from biennial CHIS for 3 age groups, age 2–5, age 6–11 and age 12–17. We calculated the prevalence of high SSB consumption (defined as having more than one SSB during the previous day). 2 measures of obesity were used – weight-for-age at or above the 95th percentile on national growth charts for children aged 2–11, and body mass index for age at or above the 95th percentile on national growth charts for adolescents aged 12–17. Logistic regression analysis is used to estimate adjusted odds ratios of high SSB consumption in 2005 and 2007 compared with the baseline year of 2003.
Percent of LA County Residents who Drink at Least One Soda or Sweetened Beverage per Day, by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: 2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey; Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Estimates are based on self-reported data by a random sub-sample of 1,040 Los Angeles County adults.
Percent of LA County Adults who Drink at Least One Soda or Sweetened Beverage per Day, by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: 2007 Los Angeles County Health Survey; Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Estimates are based on self-reported data by a random sub-sample of 1,040 Los Angeles County adults.
SODA: Some Fear Loss of Funds if Soft Drink Sales Are Ended

Clear perennial crops

.times staff writer

L.A. Schools Set to Can Soda Sales

The Los Angeles Unified School District recently announced that it is planning to eliminate soda sales at its schools in order to save money and improve student health. The district has been under pressure from health advocates and parents to reduce sugary drinks, which are believed to contribute to obesity and other health problems.

The decision comes after a series of meetings with parents, teachers, and students to discuss the impact of soda sales on school budgets and student health. District officials estimate that removing soda sales will save the school district several million dollars per year.

Opponents of the move argue that soda sales provide an important source of revenue for schools, which could affect their ability to fund other programs. They also believe that eliminating soda sales could have a negative impact on student morale and the quality of school lunches.

The district has also faced criticism from some parents who argue that the decision could be detrimental to student health, as some students depend on soda as a source of hydration.

The matter is currently under review by the school board, which is expected to make a final decision in the coming weeks. Parents, students, and community members are encouraged to provide their input on the issue.
Legislative Successes, California

- K-8 soda ban, 2003 (SB 677, Ortiz)
- High school soda ban, 2005 (SB 965, Escutia)
- But!
  - sports drinks not covered
  - adherence spotty
LA County vending policy guidelines:

• Vending machines with beverages must include bottled water as an option, and the price should be no higher than the other beverages
• Fruit-based drinks must contain at least 50 percent fruit juice, without added sweeteners
• Vegetable-based drinks must be at least 50 percent vegetable juice, without added sweeteners
• Milk products can include two-percent, one-percent, nonfat, soy, rice and other similar non-dairy milk without added sweeteners
• Sugar sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages that do not exceed 25 calories per 8 ounces are allowed
Seizing the Moment and the Momentum: Communities Putting Prevention to Work

RENEW LA County

Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise, and Wellness
Communities Putting Prevention to Work:
Healthy eating strategies

10 cities have implemented healthy vending standards:

- South El Monte
- Baldwin Park
- La Puente
- Pasadena
- El Monte
- Pico Rivera
- Huntington Park
- San Fernando
- Bell Gardens
- Long Beach
Healthy procurement strategies

*County of Los Angeles Board Motion:*
Passed March 22, 2011

- Instructs county departments to consult with Public Health prior to the release of RFPs for county food services contracts that involve the purchase, distribution, and/or sale of food and beverages in County facilities and programs
- Ensures that dietary requirements promote healthy nutrition and comply with previously adopted Board policies
- Since passage, a food procurement advisory group was formed to guide policy development and implementation
Sample nutrition standards

Hospital & Worksite Cafeterias
- Healthy entrée and healthy side options
- Reduced portion size for sugar-sweetened beverages
- Gradual sodium reduction plan
- Purchase locally grown food, when feasible
- Include signage for healthy items and calorie postings (menu labeling)
- Price incentive policies

Juvenile Halls/Probation Camps
- 100% fruit juice with no added sweeteners and low sodium vegetable juice
- Fat-free or 1% fat milk with no added sweeteners
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheeses
- Canned or frozen fruits with no added sweeteners
- Low-sodium canned vegetables
Media support:

Launch of “sugar pack” campaign

- Transit TV – 30 second sugar video spots
- CBS Outdoor – transit shelters, indoor bus and rail car cards, Metro station posters, billboards, and exterior bus and rail cars
- Online ads directing to www.choosehealthLA.com
Goals of the education campaign:

• Promote healthy eating, reduce sugar-loaded drink consumption and increase community support for healthier food environments

• Establish a strategic and fully integrated multimedia approach for community education
Building the campaign

Research – focus groups

- Conducted six focus groups across LA County to inform creative concepts and messaging

- Hit diverse and multilingual populations by ethnicity, education, socioeconomic status, age, soda consumption and city of residence in LA County
Focus groups – key findings

• Knowledge and awareness of issue was low
• Tremendous opportunity to raise awareness – but also some difficult barriers to overcome
• Drinking soda is a habit that participants share with their children and introduce at a young age
• Cultural norm of soda/sweet beverage consumption in Latino culture
Focus groups – key findings

• Parents were more permissive of sports drinks – belief that they are healthier, necessary for hydration, good for when kids are sick
• Doctors “prescribe” sports drinks when children are sick
• Most participants understood that energy drinks are inappropriate for children
Focus groups – key findings

• “Sugar-loaded drink” more impactful description than “sugary” or “sugar-sweetened” drink

• We need to educate the public (especially lower socioeconomic populations) that:
  ▪ There is more sugar in soda than you thought
  ▪ Extra calories in sugary drinks may lead to serious health consequences like obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer
YOU WOULDN'T EAT 22 PACKS OF SUGAR. WHY ARE YOU DRINKING THEM?

YOU WOULDN'T EAT 12 PACKS OF SUGAR. WHY ARE YOU DRINKING THEM?

YOU WOULDN'T EAT 17 PACKS OF SUGAR. WHY ARE YOU DRINKING THEM?

Extra calories in sugar-loaded drinks may lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. CHOOSEHEALTHLA.com

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County of Los Angeles Public Health
Impressions since launch:

- More than 326,200,000 impressions through outdoor placement
- More than 81,860,000 impressions on Transit TV
- More than 200 news clips
- 1.5 million Twitter impressions
- 63,000 interactions on Facebook, with application helping to quadruple page “Likes”
- 535,000 website hits
Next steps:

- Expand, intensify, and evaluate public education efforts
- Continue work with public agencies to implement healthy food/beverage procurement policies
- Expand efforts to engage the private sector