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**Summary of Listening Sessions’  
Suggestions for Consideration by the  
Governor’s Summit On Health, Nutrition and Obesity  
November 2004 - January 2005**

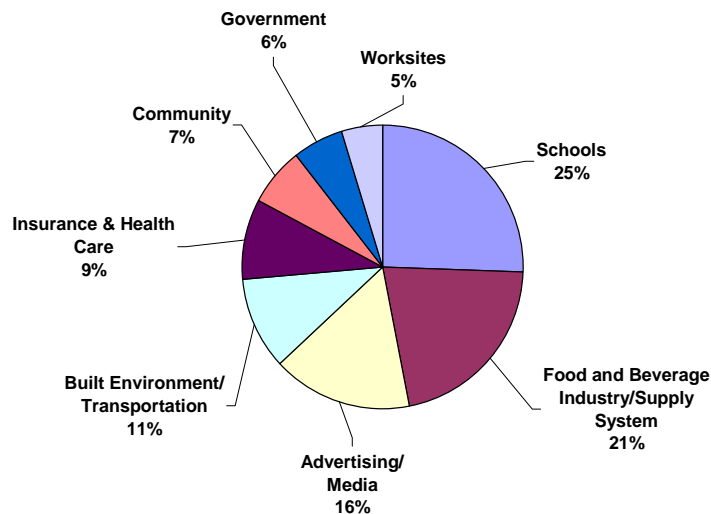
Listening Sessions for professionals in health-related fields to offer their insight and input on the development of The Governor’s Summit on Obesity Prevention were held in San Francisco on November 15, 2004, in Los Angeles on November 18, 2004, and in San Diego on January 10, 2005. In all, over 400 persons participated in these sessions. Attendees represented multiple sectors, including: community based and voluntary organizations such as the American Heart Association; parks and recreation departments, after school programs; Cooperative Extension; universities; private medical practitioners; community based health care organizations such as the Association of Asian American Community Health Organizations; health maintenance organizations (HMOs) such as Kaiser Permanente; health insurance agencies such as Blue Cross of California; public health departments; county food banks; food industry and agriculture; Federal programs such as US DHHS Office of Minority Health; and many more.

Attendees of the Listening Sessions responded to the following questions:

- 1. What are two issues or insights you want to be certain the Summit does address?*
- 2. What are two actions (or types of action) such a diverse group might take that would go the furthest in reversing the obesity epidemic?*

While listening session participants were encouraged to think of the questions separately, responses represented a merging of issues and actions. Information was generally imparted in the form of suggestions or recommendations. Responses were aggregated into the following categories: schools, food and beverage industry/supply system, advertising/media, built environment/transportation, insurance and health, community/family, government and worksite. Often recommendations fell into two categories. Where this happened, such as in the example of passing a law to mandate physical education classes in schools, the recommendation was counted in the category representing the area to be changed, in this case, “school,” rather than the category where the action might be initiated, in this case, “government.”

## Frequency of Responses by Category



## Key Recommendations by Sector:

### Food and Beverage Industry/ Supply System

#### *Access to Healthy Foods*

- Make healthy foods affordable and available across all communities
- Ensure healthy choices are available in retail outlets like restaurants, movie theaters, etc.
- Ensure local access to healthy foods, especially in low-income communities
- Develop neighborhood-based programs that provide access to healthy foods
- Increase availability of fresh healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables; address cost issues
- “Down-size” portions
- Support after-school programs to provide healthy foods and activities

#### *Marketing*

- Improve nutrition labeling on restaurant food and beverages, fast foods and beverages, as well as packaged foods; make sure the labeling is clear and easy to understand.
- Adjust slotting fees to encourage a shift from prime placement of unhealthy to healthy foods
- Work with food processors to provide incentives to create healthy, appetizing, convenient foods.
- Eliminate marketing of unhealthy food in schools

***Supermarkets and Grocery Stores***

- Promote supermarkets as first choice for fast, healthy meals
- Promote positive lifestyle messages in supermarkets and provide point-of-decision nutrition information
- Adopt “healthy choices in foods” programs in grocery stores
- Address the issue of the disproportionate number of convenience stores, fast food outlets and liquor stores in low income communities.

***Agriculture***

- Bring farmers markets to neighborhoods as part of redevelopment efforts
- Better link producers with low-income consumers, particularly to improve access to fruits and vegetables
- Launch a state produce network in partnership with California food banks and California food producers to distribute market surplus produce to low-income families
- Increase farmer’s market programs and farm-to-school programs
- Provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables after school to parents and their children
- Maintain and improve current successful federal food programs – streamline access and eligibility
- Distribute food stamps and WIC vouchers at farmers markets
- Establish DOD buying programs for rural communities

***Industry to Schools***

- Promote healthy food and beverage vending machines
- Repackage and rework healthy food products for school food service
- Have corporations which provide foods to schools develop a healthy food track in their catalogs

**Schools*****Nutrition Education***

- Have “fruit mobiles” with healthy snacks/fruits and vegetables at every school during every meal
- Promote school garden programs paired with cooking and nutrition education
- Involve culinary industry in school nutrition education
- Have more health education and physical activity in after school programs

***Physical Activity***

- Create new regulations to improve/increase/make PE mandatory in schools
- Develop and enforce laws and policies regarding physical activity requirements in schools.
- Improve/increase/make mandatory PE
- Promote safe [walking and biking] routes to schools
- Incorporate fitness tests in school accountability grade

- Create fun fitness education for all grades
- Increase time allotted and diversity of activities for physical education

### ***Foods Offered***

- Build a relationship between education, food industry, and agriculture that makes it easier to bring fruits and vegetables into school meal programs.
- Offer more healthy food choices
- Limit or eliminate (ban) sale of chips, soda, candy; provide nutritious alternatives and create nutrition policies; implement SB 19
- Allocate more funding to build better food preparation and eating areas and subsidize healthy options

### ***School Staff***

- Form coalitions at the school level including staff and community, to support food service personnel to make changes
- Provide professional development and technical support for teachers and educators
- Encourage teachers to model healthy behavior
- Involve school nurses to connect students to health care and prevention efforts

## **Government**

- Raise minimum wage
- Establish government database to monitor progress of nutrition and physical activity accomplishments

### ***Government to Industry***

- Increase regulation/restrictions on fast food outlets
- Establish taxes or fees on junk foods and fast foods.
- Utilize experts to help refine the food excise tax proposals
- Provide tax incentives to those who promote healthy foods
- Provide subsidies for nutritious foods
- Provide incentives to grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods to provide an increased percentage of shelf space for fresh and healthy foods. Incentives could include tax breaks, free advertising, energy efficient appliances, utility cost decrease for heat and refrigeration.
- Increase funding to pay for interventions

### ***Government to Schools***

- Fund and/or provide other incentives for school districts to promote healthy habits through efforts such as:
  - Mandatory health education, with a focus on healthy lifestyles, nutrition, and disease prevention

- Improve foods offered in school meals and vending machines and eliminate sales of unhealthy foods in competition with meal programs
- Requiring physical activity in schools and providing appropriate physical education, including a variety of non-competitive and non-sports activities
- Provide schools more money per pupil if they have healthy nutrition/physical activity policies
- Reward districts that increase fruit and vegetable consumption
- Work with USDA to decrease minimum caloric requirements for school lunches
- Increase funding for schools
- Link school food programs with local farmers by way of financial incentives

### **Built Environment/Transportation**

- Promote smart growth, contain sprawl
- Create infrastructure that supports active communities.
- Redesign communities to be walkable/ bikable (ensure new developments are designed to promote walking)
- Plan and implement regulations to promote and fund walkable communities
- Promote/fund walking and biking programs and public transportation.
- Establish bicycle and safe walking routes to transit and to schools.
- Establish a culture of multi-modality – reduce dominance of automobiles
- Improve neighborhood safety in terms of crime, traffic and injury prevention for pedestrians and cyclists in neighborhoods, playgrounds, and community areas
- Address disparities in access to safe open spaces for physical activity in parks and schools.
- Develop more exercise facilities/open space/community public spaces
- Address financial costs of recreation
- Organize and hold more community gathering places—community centers, community gardens
- Improve indoor spaces for physical activities, for example, by opening staircases in public buildings
- Regulate housing developments to assure equal health promoting amenities in low income housing
- Establish zoning to decrease density of fast foods/liquor stores and to promote physical activity

### **Community**

- Better utilize or maximize use of Parks & Recreation, after school activities, children's clubs
- Resolve legal issues regarding using schools for after school activity programs

- Set guidelines for childcare providers to be licensed for mandatory activity levels and for menu patterns
- Set guidelines for payment levels of childcare providers based on participation in nutrition training programs
- Address need for more community based programs to facilitate healthy lifestyles.
- Set criteria/best practices for community programs

### *Parents and Family*

- Support the family as a unit to change behaviors in relation to food and activity
- Encourage parents to model healthy behaviors
- Provide a supportive home environment for breastfeeding

### **Advertising/Media**

- Restrict and/or ban marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages especially to children
- Reduce the number of minutes of [advertising in] prime slots during children's television viewing (similar to tobacco ads in print advertising).
- Market healthy foods, healthy eating and physical activity, especially to children and youth.
- Launch a (statewide) public education mass media campaign to promote healthy choices
  - Include Hollywood, media outlets, youth, physicians to develop and promote messages and strategies
  - Use time donated by television and cable networks
- Tax advertising dollars
- Support social marketing to promote healthy behaviors
- Focus on positive nutrition and physical activity marketing
- Use marketing to promote breastfeeding

### **Health Care**

- Improve access to health care/preventive care/culturally competent care
- Improve health insurance
  - Lower rates for healthy practices/incentives for health
  - Provide coverage for health counseling
- Cover health counseling and prevention services in insurance plans and reimburse clinical services aimed at identifying and reducing obesity
- Better educate medical professionals/ provide more continuing education on topic
- Educate physicians about nutrition
- Remove fast food outlets from hospitals
- Promote breastfeeding to prevent obesity
- Increase "baby friendly" hospitals
- Eliminate or restrict marketing of formula in hospitals

## Worksites

- Promote employee wellness programs
- Ensure healthy choices are available in worksites.
- Create tax incentives
  - For businesses and organizations that promote healthy eating/ activity
  - For fitness facilities that become kid friendly
  - For businesses that offer employees time for exercise
- Provide a supportive worksite environment for breastfeeding
  - Encourage time off for new mothers
  - Provide lactation rooms
  - Allow adequate breaks for breast pumping

All Sectors - A few less mentioned, but **innovative** recommendations follow:

- Include the health environment of schools in Academic Performance Index
- Include nutrition education on standardized tests
- Mandate one healthy food message for X number of ads for unhealthy foods
- Work with the video game industry to provide more active video games
- Create a “zone of health” around every young California child – off limits to provision, marketing, or modeling of unhealthy foods, messages and behaviors
- Market cell phones which include pedometers

## Summary

**The three most frequent recommendations from participants at the 2004-2005 Listening Sessions for the Governor’s Summit on Obesity Prevention were:**

- **Use taxes, zoning, regulations and incentives to promote availability of healthy food**
- **Create safe, walkable communities**
- **Improve the nutrition and physical activity environments at schools**

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