

April 13, 2017

The Honorable Bill Monning
State Capitol, Room 313
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 300 (Monning): SUPPORT

Dear Senator Monning:

As a consortium of pediatricians, dietitians, physical therapists, psychologists, and other health professionals from pediatric weight management programs in Southern California, we are writing in strong support of SB 300: Sugar-sweetened Beverages: Health Warnings. Requiring health warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) sold in California would provide consumers with valuable information regarding the health risks associated with these products and help ameliorate and prevent the pediatric obesity epidemic.

Over the past several decades, SSBs have significantly contributed to the observed increase in daily calorie intake (1, 2). These drinks are the primary source of added sugar in the diets of children, adolescents, and adults (3), and they often contain minimal nutritional value (4). Numerous research studies have concluded that consumption of SSBs is associated with increased obesity rates and weight gain (5, 6, 7, 8). Importantly, recent randomized controlled trials suggest a causal relationship between SSBs and weight gain among children and adolescents (9, 10, 11). Conversely, efforts to decrease consumption of SSBs in clinical research have been linked to weight loss among the participants (12, 13).

The prevalence of childhood obesity has more than tripled (5% to 17%) from 1974 to 2014 (14). Nationally, one in three children and two in three adults are either overweight or obese. This has serious financial implications, with annual spending on obesity-related illnesses amounting to 21% (\$190.2 billion) of the total national health expenditures. Additionally, there are \$4.3 billion in annual losses to businesses because of obesity-related job absenteeism (15).

Obesity increases risk for development of type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes was previously seen only in adults, but it is now affecting a high proportion of children as well. There is an estimated one in three lifetime risk of developing diabetes for individuals born in 2000 and one in two if that individual is African American or Hispanic (16). Habitual consumption of SSBs has been found to be associated with higher incidences of type 2 diabetes (17). Other conditions, such as dental caries (18, 19), asthma (20), and inadequate intake of nutrients (21, 22, 23, 24), have also been linked to children who drink SSBs.

A recent research study showed that adolescents who are presented SSBs including warning labels demonstrated improved recognition of beverage sugar content (25). Another study regarding warning labels concluded that parents improved their understanding of health harms associated with overconsumption (26). We believe these demonstrated increases in knowledge will better-inform the health decisions of the children in our communities and their families and help reduce the pediatric obesity epidemic.

Every week, we care for children suffering from the health and mental health challenges of obesity. We see the effects of excess SSBs firsthand in our weight management programs and work with families to mitigate these risks.

We commend you for your efforts to introduce this important bill and protect the health of our California youth. Thank you for your continued leadership.

**Please note: these are our individual opinions, which are not necessarily reflective of our institutions' views.*

Respectfully,

The Southern California Pediatric Weight Management Consortium: a collaborative group of multidisciplinary healthcare providers working to build and sustain a robust network to treat pediatric and adolescent obesity and to promote its prevention in Southern California.

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