


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner <i>Leana Wen</i>	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 15-0213R – Informational Hearing – Sugar Free Kids		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

May 11, 2015

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 15-0213R – Informational Hearing – Sugar Free Kids. The purpose of this bill is to invite members of the Sugar Free Kids coalition to appear before the Council to discuss the effects that sugar has on our children, as well as ways that these effects can be reduced and mitigated to ensure a healthy future for all of Baltimore’s children.

Research studies have shown that sugar sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption leads to excess caloric intake, weight gain, and increased obesity rates among children and adolescents.ⁱ In Baltimore City 24.3% of school-aged children drink one or more soda per day and 25.8% of school-aged children are obese.ⁱⁱ In 2004, adolescents consumed an average of 300 calories per day from SSBs, accounting for 13 percent of their daily caloric intake. Researchers conclude that reducing SSB consumption would decrease the risk of childhood obesity and many other health problems, including type 2 diabetes.ⁱⁱⁱ

The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illnesses are a staggering \$190.2 billion or nearly 21% of annual medical spending in the United States.^{iv} The medical costs of obesity are so substantial that the rise in obesity explains 27 percent of the rise in health care spending between 1987 and 2001.^v Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs.^{vi} Annually, the average total health expenses for a child treated for obesity under Medicaid is \$6,730, while the average health cost for all children covered by Medicaid is \$2,446. The average total health expenses for a child treated for obesity under private insurance is \$3,743, while the average health cost for all children covered by private insurance is \$1,108.^{vii} Public health evidence clearly shows that the consumption of SSBs is linked to poor health outcomes and increased health care costs.

BCHD supports this legislation and appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important issue. We will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have on this matter.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Rianna Matthews-Brown, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Andrew Nicklas, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Health

R

ⁱ Robertwood Johnson Foundation. <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2009/11/the-negative-impact-of-sugar-sweetened-beverages-on-children-s-h.html>

ⁱⁱ County Health Rankings, DHMH. http://phpa.dhmd.maryland.gov/OEHFP/EH/tracking/Shared%20Documents/County-Profiles/BaltimoreCity_Final.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Robertwood Johnson Foundation. <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2009/11/the-negative-impact-of-sugar-sweetened-beverages-on-children-s-h.html>

^{iv} National League of Cities. Economic Costs of Obesity. <http://www.healthycommunitieshealthyfuture.org/learn-the-facts/economic-costs-of-obesity/>

^v What Are the Health Risks of Overweight and Obesity? <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/obe/risks>

^{vi} National League of Cities. Economic Costs of Obesity. <http://www.healthycommunitieshealthyfuture.org/learn-the-facts/economic-costs-of-obesity/>

^{vii} State of Obesity.org Fast Facts: Economic Costs of Obesity. <http://stateofobesity.org/facts-economic-costs-of-obesity/>