


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner	Health Department AGENCY REPORT	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	17-0152 – Food Service Facilities – Healthy Beverages for Children’s Meals		

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

January 25, 2018

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review 17-0152 – Food Service Facilities – Healthy Beverages for Children’s Meals. The purpose of this legislation is to require food service facilities that offer beverages as part of a children’s meal to make milk, juice, and water the default beverage options for those menu items.

Intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) leads to excess caloric intake, weight gain, and obesity, and increases the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.¹ SSBs are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet. Drinking one SSB per day increases a child’s odds of suffering from obesity by 60%.²

In Baltimore City, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate more than one-third of all school-aged children are either overweight or obese.³ CDC data shows that more than one-quarter of Baltimore City school children will consume at least one soda today, while more than a third will not consume any milk.⁴ This creates expensive health issues for Baltimore. In 2018, diseases resulting from poor dietary habits are expected to cost Maryland’s healthcare system more than \$7.6 billion in direct medical costs.

SSBs are often marketed to children, as beverage companies tout drinks with kid-friendly flavor options and packaging designs specifically to children in low-income households.⁵ In 2013, beverage companies spent \$866 million⁶ to advertise unhealthy drinks to children, almost four

¹ Massey, W. (2016, August 22). Proposed warnings on sugary drinks a matter of health, justice, proponents say. Retrieved November 02, 2017, from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-sugary-drinks-bill-20160607-story.html>.

² US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11229668>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?TT=C&SID=HS&QID=H77&LID=BA&LID2=SL&YID=2013&YID2=SY&SYID=&EYID=&HT=QQ&LCT=LL&COL=S&ROW1=N&ROW2=N&TST=false&C1=&C2=&SC=DEFAULT&SO=ASC&VA=CI&CS=Y&DP=1&QP=G&FG=G1&FR=R1&FS=S1>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Nutrition. (2017, April 07). Retrieved November 02, 2017, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/sugar-sweetened-beverages-intake.html>.

⁶ Orciari, M. (2014, November 19). Beverage companies still target kids with marketing for unhealthy, sugary drinks. Retrieved November 02, 2017, from <https://news.yale.edu/2014/11/19/beverage-companies-still-target-kids-marketing-unhealthy-sugary-drinks>.

times the amount spent to advertise 100% juice and water. Further, this advertising disproportionately targeted youth of color, as spending on ads for unhealthy drinks directed toward black and Latino youth occurred at higher rates than similar advertising aimed at white children.⁷ These advertising components target our most vulnerable neighbors.⁸

Creating a healthy beverage default option for children's meals among restaurants promotes healthier lifestyle choices for Baltimore City's children and their families. **BCHD strongly supports this legislation, and urges the committee a favorable report.** We will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have for this legislation.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Weinfeld, J. (n.d.). Sugary drinks: a sickeningly sweet issue. The Baltimore Sun. Retrieved November, 2017, from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-sugary-drinks-20160414-story.html>.