



April 17, 2018

TO: Members of the House Human Services Committee

FROM: Jennifer Costa, ACS CAN, Government Relations Director

SUBJECT: S. 70 written testimony

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) supports S. 70 to remove sugary drinks as the default option for children's menus as a step toward reducing obesity and the risk for chronic diseases, including cancer. ACS CAN is the non-partisan, nonprofit advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem.

For the majority of Americans who do not use tobacco, the most important behaviors to reduce cancer risk are weight control, dietary choices, and physical activity.<sup>i</sup> In fact, excess weight increases the risk for many cancers, including cancers of the female breast (postmenopausal), colon and rectum, uterus, kidney, pancreas, ovary, liver, gastric cardia, gall bladder, and thyroid, and adenocarcinoma of the esophagus, meningioma, and multiple myeloma<sup>ii</sup>.

Nearly, one in three children are overweight or obese; and childhood overweight and obesity increases the risk of these conditions in adulthood. The majority of children consume diets too low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and too high in sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars. Many of the foods and beverages that are heavily marketed to children contribute to poor diet quality, high calorie intake, and excess weight gain.<sup>iii</sup>

Sugary drinks, also known as sugar-sweetened beverages, are the leading source of added sugar and one of the leading sources of calories in Americans' diets. Nearly 40 percent of all added sugars come from sugary beverages.<sup>iv</sup> The *2015-2020 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*<sup>v</sup> and the World Health Organization<sup>vi</sup> recommend reducing added sugars consumption to no more than 10 percent of calories, or 200 calories per day for a 2,000 calorie diet. Currently, children ages 9-18 consume 17 percent of calories from added sugars,<sup>vii</sup> contributing to overweight and obesity and increasing long-term cancer risk.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is focused on creating healthy social and physical environments and providing consumers with clear, useful information that support making healthy lifestyle choices. Reducing the marketing of unhealthy foods to children is an important strategy for reducing childhood obesity and creating an environment that supports healthy food choices.<sup>viii</sup>

ACS CAN supports strong nutrition criteria for foods and beverages sold to children. We support legislation requiring restaurants to apply nutrition standards to all children's meals served, including removing sugary drinks from children's menus.

Responsible food marketing to children and adolescents can only be achieved when all child-directed marketing and practices are addressed and the foods and beverages marketed meet strong nutrition criteria.<sup>ix</sup> Responsible food and beverage marketing is an opportunity to establish positive eating and physical activity habits in children and adolescents that can ultimately reduce their risk for cancer and maintain and improve their health over the course of their lifetime.<sup>x</sup>

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Costa, Vt. Government Relations Director, ACS CAN

<sup>i</sup> American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2015*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> Lauby-Secretan B, Scoccianti C, Loomis D, et al. Body Fatness and Cancer – Viewpoint of the IARC Working Group. *N Engl J Med* 2016; 375: 8.

<sup>iii</sup> Healthy Eating Research. Recommendations for Responsible Food Marketing to Children. Minneapolis, MN: Healthy Eating Research; 2015. Retrieved from: <http://healthyeatingresearch.org/?p=3108>. Accessed December 18, 2015.

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<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2010*. January 2016. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.

v Ibid.

vi World Health Organization. Guideline: Sugars Intake for Adults and Children. 2015. Available at [http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars\\_intake/en/](http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars_intake/en/).

vii Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> American Cancer Society. Comment Letter to Federal Trade Commission on “Interagency Working Group on Food Marketed: Proposed Nutrition Principles FTC Project No. P094513”.

2014. Available online at <http://www.acscan.org/content/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ACS-CAN-Comments-on-IWG-Proposed-Nutrition-Principles-for-Food-Marketing.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Healthy Eating Research. Recommendations for Responsible Food Marketing to Children. Minneapolis, MN: Healthy Eating Research; 2015. Available at: <http://healthyeatingresearch.org/?p=3108>.

<sup>x</sup> Healthy Eating Research, 2015.