



Address the Childhood Obesity Epidemic: Make **ALL** Foods Sold in Schools Healthy

Support HB 900

HB 900 will take a step toward making ALL foods sold and offered in schools healthy.

HB 900 directs the State Board of Education to set statewide nutrition standards for competitive foods sold in schools, such as vending machine, school store and fundraising sales. Currently, there is much variability among schools across the state when it comes to creating healthier food environments in schools. HB 900 will ensure that a strong state policy is in place to make certain *ALL* schools provide students access to competitive foods and beverages that are healthy and nutritious.

WHY Should *ALL* Foods Sold and Offered in NC Schools Be Healthy?

More than 1/3 of NC's Kids Are Overweight or Obese: Over one-third (33.5%) of North Carolina children and youth age 10-17 are overweight or obese.¹ As a result, North Carolina is ranked 11th in the nation in the number of most overweight and obese children age 10 - 17.²

Kids Eat Nearly Half of Their Calories at School: A cross-sectional, nationally representative study revealed that children consume up to 47% of their total daily calories from meals and snacks at school.³ A student's dietary habits are influenced by their school's food environment,⁴ and research shows that limiting children's access to low-nutrient, high calorie foods at school can help control their weight.⁵

Better Nutrition = Better Grades: Research has demonstrated a link between healthy foods and better academic performance in schools.⁶ Unhealthy body weight in adolescence has also been associated with poorer academic performance⁷ and potentially to higher dropout rates.⁸

Given the growing severity of the childhood obesity epidemic, the proportion of calories consumed by children in the school setting, the link between healthy foods and body weight, and the link between body weight and academic performance, the logical conclusion is that ALL foods sold and offered in schools should be required to be healthy. **HB 900 takes a step toward this important goal.**

The Health Costs of Obesity Make It Critical that North Carolina Address the Childhood Obesity Epidemic *NOW*.

- *According to a 2008 study by Be Active North Carolina, the health care costs of physical inactivity, excess weight and type II diabetes among NC youth in 2006 exceeded \$105 million annually.⁹ By 2015, these costs will rise to **\$205 million annually.***
- The average overweight NC child will accrue \$28,619 in direct medical expenses by the midpoint of his/her career and over \$250,000 in direct health care costs by his/her retirement.¹⁰
- Overweight adolescents are 70% more likely to grow up and enter NC's workforce as overweight and obese adults.¹¹ An obese adult will have annual medical costs 37.4% higher than their healthy weight counterparts, representing an additional \$732 per obese person, per year.¹² In addition, an overweight or obese adult will accrue \$250,000 in lost productivity over the course of his or her career.¹³
- If just 3% of North Carolinians moved from overweight or obese to a healthy weight through physical activity and good nutrition, North Carolinians could save three billion dollars between 2007 and 2011. That's enough to fund the UNC system for a year, or pay for 68,000 new jobs.¹⁰

Make the health of NC's children a priority by taking a step toward tackling the childhood obesity epidemic.

Support HB 900 and take a step toward making ALL foods sold and offered in schools healthy.

For more information, go to www.NCAllianceforHealth.org or www.ncschoolnutrition.com.
Contact ncalliance@heart.org

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