



**Howard County Council Public Hearing
July 21, 2014**

**CB 37-2014
Food and Beverage Sales on County Property**

Dear Chairman Ball and Council members.

On behalf of the Association of Community Services (ACS), representing over 125 nonprofit organizations, human service providers, and community advocates focused on serving Howard County residents, I ask that you vote against CB 37-2014.

For the past 50 years, ACS has been advocating to improve the quality of life for Howard County residents. Improving, particularly, their health and wellness has long been a priority of our organization given that those we serve—including those who have less education and earn smaller wages—suffer disproportionately from chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

Esteemed institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cite the establishment of local government nutrition guidelines as key measures in lowering community obesity and diabetes rates. National data show that nearly 1 out of every 3 children is now likely to develop diabetes in his or her lifetime, and that number increases to 1 out of every 2 for African Americans and Hispanics. As a result, this may be the first generation of children that could live shorter lives than their parents.

Howard County has not been exempt from these alarming trends. County government is in a unique and powerful position to support and model healthy lifestyle choices, such as reducing sugary beverage intake, that have been proven to reduce the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases. The implementation of nutrition guidelines ensuring that healthy food and drink choices are abundantly available to all who use county parks and participate in government programs is an important step that can help reverse these trends in our community.

We are on the right path to being one of the healthiest counties in the nation and the county nutrition standards are an important step along this path. We ask that you maintain the standards by voting against this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

Joan Driessen

Joan R. Driessen
Executive Director

