



To: County Council of Howard County Maryland
From: Michaeline R. Fedder, Director of Government Relations, Maryland
Subject: Enthusiastic Support for Bill No. 17-2015

The American Heart Association's Mission is, "Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke."

Our Goal is, "by 2020, to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20% while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20%"

Our Work includes a wide range of activities including but not limited to Advocacy, Education, Raising Awareness particularly among at-risk populations, Improving patient care and Protecting our future by helping kids develop life-long healthy habits.

Every activity in which we engage, however, has its roots in research, research supported by our organization. We've made great strides over time but heart disease is still the number one killer in Maryland and in the United States. And we have to continue looking for more answers.

But answers found in the research laboratory don't save lives until they are put into practice, until we translate the science into a usable form; until the scientific breakthrough is actualized.

So let's turn to Council Bill Number 17-2015, introduced recently by Councilperson Calvin Ball. Passage of this bill would make healthier food and beverages choices available and affordable on county property.

So why do we want to do this and what will it accomplish?

Research has documented a link between daily sugary drink consumption and diabetes, tooth decay, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, weight gain....

Consumption of sugary snacks is not much better.

A commentary in a prestigious newspaper recently suggested that "Sugar is the new public enemy number 1."



You have heard tonight that young children, preteens, are being diagnosed with what used to be considered “adult-onset diabetes.”

You have heard tonight that we are in the midst of a childhood obesity epidemic.

You have heard tonight that children born today are expected to live shorter lives than their parents.

The pre-ambule to the bill beautifully sets out the case for support of County Bill 17-2015.

And again, please keep in mind that these statements are all supported by high quality research.

Will passage of this bill eradicate all the problems we are discussing tonight? Of course not. There is not any single bullet that can do this. We are talking about one small step that will make a difference. We are talking about providing choices for those who want them...convenient choices. We are talking about helping motivated people conveniently find healthy options.

There is a groundswell of support for this legislation which provides healthy choices but allows for reasonable exceptions. I urge your support of this bill. The people who live, work, shop and spend quality time in this county deserve no less.

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