

# Strategic Alliance

Promoting healthy food and activity environments

510.444.7738 ■ [www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org) ■ [StrategicAlliance@preventioninstitute.org](mailto:StrategicAlliance@preventioninstitute.org)

## THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY FOOD AND ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENTS

is reframing the debate on nutrition and physical activity, from simply a matter of individual choice and lifestyle to an issue of environment and corporate and government responsibility. By changing nutrition/physical activity norms and the environment, the Alliance's goal is to benefit the health and wellness of all California residents.

As evidenced by the high incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers, the existing nutrition and physical activity environment is taking a terrible toll on health. Skyrocketing obesity rates are a symptom of current community norms shaped by a market-driven economy that promotes overeating and sedentary behavior. Children and adults are targets of intensive marketing campaigns promoting soda, fast foods, high-calorie snacks, automobiles, and passive leisure-time activities including TV, movies, and video games. These commodities are frequently more readily available in schools and communities than healthy eating options, physical education, and attractive walking, biking, and other exercise opportunities.

An important role of the Alliance is to serve as an independent voice that can influence government and industry. Working as a coalition and in partnership with other groups, the Alliance was instrumental in improving the availability of nutritious food in public schools, highlighted by the passage of SB 19. SB 19 establishes state nutrient standards for beverages, snacks, and side dishes sold in schools and also prohibits the sale of soft drinks to elementary school students and limits the availability of these beverages to middle school students. Currently, the Alliance is working to ensure full implementation and maximum impact of SB 19 standards on improving childhood nutrition.

We are currently engaged in building a broad and diverse statewide membership. If you would like to join The Strategic Alliance or invite a Strategic Alliance representative to your next meeting, please contact us.

**The Alliance is supported by funding from The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation.**

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** The California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program (CANFit) ■ California Center for Public Health Advocacy ■ California Food Policy Advocates ■ California Pan Ethnic Health Network ■ California Project LEAN ■ California WIC Association ■ Child Care Food Program Roundtable ■ Latino Health Access ■ Prevention Institute ■ Samuels & Associates, Inc

## THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES IN FIVE KEY SECTORS:

### Children's Environments

- Pre-school, school, and after-school programs should provide healthy food options, quality physical education, facilities and equipment for active play.
- Ensure children have time and space for recess and other unstructured play.
- Fast food, junk food and soft drinks and marketing of these products should be eliminated from these settings.
- Every facility should have working water fountains or other sources of free drinking water.
- Children should have safe walking and biking routes to school and other key destinations.

### Government

- Public funds should be directed to improve the availability of affordable nutritious foods, pedestrian and bicycle access, and park and facilities for active recreation.
- Public funds should not subsidize the production, distribution or marketing of products contributing to poor health.
- Government workplaces should implement standards to provide healthy foods in cafeterias and vending machines and facilitate exercise through bike racks, well-lit stairwells, and showers.

### Industry Practices

- Industry should adopt guidelines for responsible marketing of food, entertainment, and sports-related products to children to eliminate promotion of unhealthy behaviors.
- Discontinue corporate sponsorships/partnerships that link popular children's media icons (professional athletes, cartoon characters, etc.) with soft drinks, fast foods, and other unhealthy products.
- Discontinue exclusive soft drink and fast food contracts with school districts, parks and recreation departments, and other public entities.
- Adopt sustainable practices that do not harm the natural environment in product development, production and distribution.

### Health Care System

- Medical providers should adopt standards of practice that focus on effective patient education and counseling and minimize use of surgical or pharmaceutical treatments for childhood obesity.
- Health professionals and institutions should use their influence as health spokespeople to advocate for healthy food and physical activity environments as essential elements for good health.
- Health care facilities should support healthy behaviors including breastfeeding, healthy food options, and physical activity and not permit fast food chains on site.
- Provide healthy food options and greater access to physical activity for both staff and patients.

### Media

- Ensure media stories related to obesity, nutrition and physical activity include an environmental and policy perspective as well as discussion of individual responsibility.
- Resist partnerships with companies that market unhealthy products.
- Reduce advertising to children broadcasted by television and radio stations.
- Shift the focus of obesity-related stories towards healthier eating & activity and away from weight loss.