

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Illinois Chapter



ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Devoted to Advocacy, Education & Action

Dear Representative/Senator X:

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) and the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP), are writing to ask your support for the inclusion of the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Act in the FY2016 budget package. The HEAL Act invests in community prevention and Medicaid, through a small excise tax on sugary drinks.

Collectively our statewide organizations represent over 6,500 pediatricians and family physicians in nearly every legislative district in Illinois. Our memberships comprise a broad spectrum of physicians, including academic medical center chairs, primary care physicians, sub-specialists, medical school faculty, researchers, health plan medical directors and hospital administrators. Many of them see the adverse health impacts of sugary drinks on patients and their families every day.

As the state faces a budget crisis, the HEAL Act can raise an estimated \$600 million annually to prevent cuts in Medicaid and invest in a healthier Illinois. We strongly believe that revenues from a sugary drink tax should be targeted to critical clinical prevention and treatment services in Medicaid for childhood obesity and oral health, which would lower state spending on health care.

Additionally, funds raised from the HEAL Act should be invested in the promotion of physical activity and healthy eating. These efforts would include, for example, improving access to affordable fruits and vegetables, providing kids more options for safe places to play, and supporting the development of multi-use trails for biking, running, and walking so that everyone can be active and healthier.

The connection of sugary drinks to obesity in both children and adults is now clearly established. Sufficient scientific evidence demonstrates that decreasing consumption of these drinks reduces the prevalence of obesity and costly obesity-related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. Further, sugary drinks cause cavities, behavioral problems, and the risk of poor bone health.

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) and the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) endorse the Healthy Eating and Active Living Act as part of the FY2016 budget solution because it will promote healthier children, families, and communities in Illinois.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bayldon, MD, FAAP
President
Executive Committee
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Janet L. Albers, MD
President
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