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March 20, 2014

Ron Chapman, MD, MPH, Director
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.770
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
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RE: SB 1000 (Monning) Public health: sugar-sweetened beverages: safety warnings

Dear Dr. Chapman:

As you know, the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) is an organization of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions established in statute in 1947 to consult with, advise, and make recommendations to the California Department of Public Health, other departments, boards, commissions and officials of federal, state, and local government, the Legislature, and any other organization or association on matters affecting health.

On March 6, 2014, the CCLHO Board voted to take a support position on SB 1000, a bill by Senator Monning calling for the use of safety warnings on sugary beverages as a mechanism to prevent obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. CCLHO urges the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to also support this legislation.

The prevalence of obesity in the United States with its associated health problems has increased dramatically over the past 30 years. Today, nearly 40% of California children are either overweight or obese – the highest in history. These children have a much greater likelihood of going on to become obese as adults, so we can anticipate that the adult obesity rates will continue to climb. .

Sugar beverages are the largest single cause of childhood obesity. Drinking one sugary beverage a day increases the chances for a child to become overweight by 55%. California adults who drink one soda or more per day are 27 percent more likely to be overweight or obese, and individuals who drink one to two sugar-sweetened beverages per day have a 26 percent higher risk for developing type II diabetes.

We know that adults and parents have the responsibility to make good choices for themselves and their families. However, people need reliable information to make good decisions and an environment that supports making healthy choices. SB 1000 would provide both by requiring a warning label on the front or all cans and bottles of soda and fruit drinks with added sweeteners that have 75 or more calories per 12 ounces. This warning will allow consumers to make purchasing choices informed by the latest scientific evidence.

Senate Bill 1000 is a major step forward in the fight against California's obesity and diabetes epidemic. It will protect consumers and promote informed purchasing decisions by requiring a warning about the harmful effects of consuming beverages with added sugars. We know from the successful tobacco control work in our state that health warnings can increase knowledge and perception of risk, and SB 1000 can make a major contribution to improving community health in California.

If you have questions, please contact me at Muntu.davis@acgov.org or 510-267-8010. Thank you.

Sincerely

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