



2500 Bates Avenue, Suite B | Concord, CA 94520 | Phone: (925) 608-5235 | Fax: (952) 608-5188
cchealth.org

To: Contra Costa County Family and Human Services Committee

From: Sefanit Mekuria, MD, MPH
Director of Public Health
Interim Director of Community Health and Safety Branch

Kristian Lucas, REHS
Director of Environmental Health

Re: Healthy Options at the Point-of-Sale Staff Report

Date: June 9, 2025

I. Background

On May 24, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) accepted a report from Contra Costa Health (CCH) Nutrition and Physical Activity Project (NPAP) staff and youth from Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) on the potential health benefits of Healthy Options at the Point-of-Sale (HOPS) Ordinance which would require the placement of healthy food options at the point of sale or checkout queues. Staff was directed to conduct additional research on this matter and to present their findings to the Family Human Services (FHS) Committee.

On February 27, 2023, the FHS Committee accepted a report from CCH and BACR regarding healthy food options at the point of sale. The FHS Committee directed staff to solicit feedback from the 32 unincorporated retailers that the proposed ordinance would directly impact and to return to the Board of Supervisors to present the findings.

On May 9, 2023, CCH and BACR staff were scheduled to present survey findings. While the BOS received the report, a presentation was impossible due to a full agenda and the youth's limited availability. However, it was noted that a significant number of the 32 unincorporated retailers had yet to respond to surveys disseminated to garner their input about the proposed healthy retail option ordinance. The BOS directed CCH NPAP staff to conduct a second survey to ensure that all those potentially affected by the proposed ordinance could learn more about it and ask questions. CCH staff implemented the surveys in August 2023 and held two town hall meetings for retailers in October 2023.

On March 25th, 2024, the FHS Committee accepted a report on the findings from the retail survey conducted by staff and their recommendations for further exploration of potential healthy food options at the point-of-sale ordinance. The FHS Committee directed CCH staff to return to the BOS and include in that presentation a map of the impacted stores and an update on the progress

made by local municipalities that have developed and implemented similar policies.

On November 05, 2024, the BOS accepted a staff report and directed CCH staff to work with County Counsel to draft an ordinance on healthy retail at the point of sale in stores greater than 2,000 square feet in unincorporated Contra Costa. The draft will be brought back before the Board of Supervisors for consideration and the nutrition standards for the proposed ordinance are as recommended: foods with five (5) or less grams of added sugar AND 200 mg or less of sodium per serving; gum and mints with no added sugar; beverages with no added sugar and no low- to no-calorie sweeteners.

This report provides an update on activities that have taken place within the past six months since CCH staff received the directive above from the BOS.

II. SNAP-Education for a Healthier Retail Environment

Increasing attention has been given to the role of retail food environments in shaping dietary behavior and obesity risk. Studies have shown an association between living in a neighborhood near healthy food options and better dietary quality, higher fruit/vegetable intake, and a lower risk of having a higher body weight, even after controlling for individual-level characteristics.¹

Current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) retail research indicates that food choices are significantly influenced by the environments in which they are made. Placing food and beverages at checkout induces unplanned purchases; thus, unhealthy checkout options undermine consumers' efforts to purchase healthier foods. Snacks near the register increase the likelihood that people will buy those foods. In addition, most candy, soda, and chips in checkout aisles are placed at eye level and within reach of children, undermining parents' efforts to provide their children with a well-balanced diet. In a national study, one in three adults reported purchasing foods from the checkout aisle during their last shopping trip, with lower-income shoppers more likely to buy from checkout than higher-income shoppers.

In Contra Costa County, the 2019 Kidsdata.org analyzed the FitnessGram Report and revealed that 24.5% of 5th and 27.2% of 7th-grade students are obese, with its highest obesity rates among children of color. Rates are highest among communities of color, with over 40% for African Americans, close to 50% for Hispanic and Latinos, and 60% for Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders. While many factors contribute to poor nutritional health, research suggests that communities without access to grocery stores are at higher risk of being overweight or obese, as they are often inundated with fast food restaurants and convenience stores that sell less nutritious foods. This combination is especially prevalent in low-income urban and communities of color, where fast and unhealthy foods are more readily available than nutritious options.³ Promoting SNAP-Ed healthy retail strategies at the point of sale can be a valuable tool to help improve the nutritional health of Contra Costa residents.

¹ Pem D, Jeewon R. Fruit and Vegetable Intake: Benefits and Progress of Nutrition Education Interventions- Narrative Review Article. Iran J Public Health. 2015 Oct;44(10):1309-21. PMID: 26576343; PMCID: PMC4644575.

² Martin SS, Aday AW, Almarzooq ZI, et al.; American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention Statistics Committee; Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. 2024 heart disease and stroke statistics: a report of US and global data from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2024;149:e347-913.

³ Morland KB, Evenson KR. Obesity prevalence and the local food environment. *Health Place*. 2009 Jun;15(2):491-495. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2008.09.004. Epub 2008 Oct 7. PMID: 19022700; PMCID: PMC4964264.

III. Current Activities

Since the November 5, 2024, BOS meeting, as directed, CCH Public and Environmental Health staff have worked with County Counsel to develop draft language for an ordinance that would ensure the placement of healthy food and beverage options in the retail environment at the point of sale in stores greater than 2,000 square feet in unincorporated Contra Costa. Currently, 32 retailers meet the ordinance's 2,000 square feet or more in size within Contra Costa's District, including: (9) in District 1; (5) in District 2; (5) in District 3; (0) in District 4; and (13) in District 5. Plans are underway to present a draft ordinance to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for their review and adoption at the June 24, 2025, meeting.

Concurrently, CCH staff have provided evidence-based SNAP-Ed technical assistance on healthy retail best practices to local jurisdictions, both within and outside of Contra Costa, that have expressed an interest in developing their own healthy retail policies.

CCH staff continue to support and build deeper relationships with local retailers throughout Contra Costa as they seek to improve their stores' healthy retail environment through funding provided by the California Department of Public Health CalFresh Healthy Living (also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP-Ed) grant. Additionally, the staff has been responsible for at least one retailer securing an infrastructure grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture Healthy Refrigeration (CDFA) Grant to purchase an energy-efficient refrigeration unit, allowing the retail owner to increase food access to as well as their ability to stock fresh produce, dairy, meat and egg products. As a result of these ongoing efforts and the SNAP-Ed resources provided by CCH staff, many of the retailers have increased their understanding of the critical role they play in helping to improve the health of the communities they serve.

IV. Next Steps

CCH Public and Environmental Health staff have established a three-step timeline that includes the current step, which involves educating retailers about the health benefits of healthy retailing, utilizing SNAP-Ed evidence-based technical assistance and resources. In addition, CCH staff will continue to work with County Counsel to draft language for the healthy retail at the point-of-sale ordinance. This draft will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at the June 24, 2025, meeting. Thereafter, CCH staff will be prepared to follow any further direction from the BOS that results from this session.

The second step of the timeline includes the implementation phase, during which CCH Environmental Health staff will expand their technical assistance to retailers, emphasizing the new ordinance guidelines. This will provide retailers with additional SNAP-Ed information and awareness of the nutrition standards and the no-penalty inspections. Finally, step three will begin the enforcement stage, with CCH Environmental Health staff responding to complaint-based investigations.

An update with a staff report to the FHS Committee and BOS will be prepared to include the ordinance's outcomes.



V. Recommendations

- ACCEPT a report from Contra Costa Health (CCH) with updates on CCH staff activities since the November 5, 2024, Board of Supervisors meeting.
- DIRECT CCH to present a draft ordinance that promotes the placement of healthy food options at the point of sale in retail stores greater than 2,000 square feet in unincorporated Contra Costa County at the upcoming June 24, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting.