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Santa Clara County Restricts Availability of Sugar Sweetened Beverages

San Jose, CA– Santa Clara County took another important step for children’s health this week by restricting the availability of sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) in children’s meals. Restaurants within the County’s jurisdiction will no longer be allowed to include an SSB as part of a kid’s meal-- water or unsweetened milk will be the only options they can offer. Parents who want to give their children an SSB will have to buy it separately.

Supervisor Ken Yeager introduced today’s ordinance as the natural extension of his trailblazing 2010 ordinance that required restaurants in the County’s jurisdiction to offer healthy options in all children’s meals that included a toy or other prize.

“The science on this issue is strong. We know there is a harmful link between consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and a number of serious health problems. We also know these drinks are particularly harmful to kids,” said Supervisor Yeager. “We need to do all we can to help parents make healthy choices, and to educate the public about their dangerous health effects.”

“We need to reduce the health risk associated with these drinks – weight gain, obesity, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease,” stated Dr. Sara Cody, Health Officer and Director, Public Health Department. “The policy that the Board of Supervisors approved will help people make healthier beverage choices.”

The new ordinance immediately becomes the most comprehensive in the country. It is likely to become a national model the way his 2010 ordinance did.

“It's exciting to see Santa Clara county lead the nation in adopting the most far reaching kid’s meal ordinance in the country. This kind of action makes it easier for families to eat healthier when they dine out,” said Dr. James Krieger, executive director of Healthy Food America.

The Board of Supervisors today also directed the county’s health facilities, including Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, to stop selling SSBs.

“VMC and our other health facilities are in the business of health promotion. The message we send by offering or not offering unhealthy beverage options is especially important in these places,” said Supervisor Yeager.

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