



Montgomery County Council
Bill 1-22, Eating and Drinking Establishments – Healthy Meals for Children

Proponent Testimony
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Montgomery County Council
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President Alborno, Chairman Rice, and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

My name is Lynette Tolson Somers and I am the Director of State Government Affairs for the American Diabetes Association (ADA), the nation’s leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic.

The healthy children’s meal and default drinks policy outlined in Bill 1-22 clearly aligns with ADA’s mission to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

Diabetes is an epidemic in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 34 million Americans have diabetes¹ and face its devastating consequences - and what’s true nationwide is also true in Maryland. Approximately 10.8% of the state’s adult population have diabetes and more than 33% have prediabetes.²

These statistics are devastating, to be sure, but the increased incidence of diabetes in our children is truly alarming. According to the ADA’s *Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes*, the global standard for the management and treatment of diabetes, type 2 diabetes in youth has increased over the past 20 years, and recent estimates suggest an incidence of 5,000 new cases each year.³ Researchers have projected that the prevalence of diabetes in those under 20 years of age could quadruple between 2010 and 2050.⁴

The beverages children consume in Montgomery County today could shape the reality of type 2 diabetes for decades to come. Overweight and obesity are principal risk factors for type 2

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf>

² http://main.diabetes.org/dorg/docs/state-fact-sheets/ADV_2020_State_Fact_sheets_MD.pdf

³ https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/diacare/suppl/2019/12/20/43.Supplement_1.DC1/Standards_of_Care_2020.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

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diabetes and evidence suggest that obesity in childhood can persist later in life.^{5 6} A joint American Academy of Pediatrics/American Heart Association policy statement summarizes the issue well: "Excess consumption of added sugars, especially from sugary drinks, contributes to the high prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity, especially among children and adolescents who are socioeconomically vulnerable."⁷

Sugary beverages are among the leading sources of added sugar in Americans' diet. And among youth aged 6-18 who overconsume added sugars, sugary beverages are by far the leading source.⁸

Bill 1-22 seeks to provide healthier options for children when they enjoy what are commonly called "kids' meals" in area restaurants. Whereas a customer may request and receive a sugary beverage, the default option would be the healthier beverages outlined in the ordinance. This is a positive step toward educating young people - and their parents - about the health risks associated with the consumption of high-calorie and nutrient-poor foods, particularly sugar-added beverages.

The ADA also recognizes that type 2 diabetes disproportionately impacts youth of ethnic and racial minorities. The *Standards* recommend that nutrition for youth with type 2 diabetes, like all children, should focus on healthy eating patterns and reducing caloric intake.⁹

The ADA urges support for the Health Meals for Children bill and commends Council Member Rice and the Montgomery County Council for making the health of our greatest asset, our children, of paramount importance.

Thank you.

⁵ Simmonds M, Llewellyn A, Owen CG, Woolcott N. Predicting adult obesity from childhood obesity: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obes Rev.* 2016 Feb;17(2):95-107.

⁶ Gordon-Larsen P, The NS, Adair LS. Longitudinal trends in obesity in the United States from adolescence to the third decade of life. *Obesity.* 2010;18(9):1801-80

⁷ Muth ND, Dietz WH, Magge SN, Johnson RK; AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS SECTION ON OBESITY; COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION; AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION. Public Policies to Reduce Sugary Drink Consumption in Children and Adolescents. *Pediatrics.* 2019 Apr;143(4).

⁸ Bowman SA, Clemens JC, Friday JE, Schroeder N, LaComb RP. Added Sugars in American Children's Diet: What We Eat in America, NHANES 2015-2016. USDA Agricultural Research Service. December 2019.

⁹ https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/diacare/suppl/2019/12/20/43.Supplement_1.DC1/Standards_of_Care_2020.pdf


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