



Healthy Vending Machine Policy

County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation

Policy Overview

On March 23, 2006, the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation adopted a healthy vending machine policy. The policy requires that food and beverages sold in vending machines located in all facilities under the jurisdictions of the department meet specified nutrition standards.

This policy specifies that 100% of the food and beverages sold in vending machines in recreation centers and sports facilities and 50% of the food and beverages sold in vending machines in parks and open space meet the following nutrition standards based on standards set by SB12 and SB 19. The policy also addresses advertising.

Beverages in each vending machine shall be:

- water
- non fat or 1% low fat milk (including soy or cow's milk, chocolate or other flavored milk not containing more than 15 grams of added sugar per 250 gram serving or 3 teaspoons sugar per 1 cup milk)
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- fruit-based drinks containing at least 50% juice and no added caloric sweeteners
- all other non-caloric beverages, including diet sodas
- sports drinks less than or equal to 100 calories
- no greater than 12 ounces except for water, with a preference for juices in small size portions (6 ounces)

Snacks/foods shall meet all the following criteria per individual package:

- not more than 250 calories
- not more than 35% calories from fat with the exception of nuts and seeds; snack mixes and other foods of which nuts are a part must meet the 35% standard
- not more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- does not contain trans fats added during processing (hydrogenated oils and partially hydrogenated oils)
- not more than 35% total weight from sugar and caloric sweeteners with the exception of fruits and vegetables that have not been processed with added sweeteners or fats
- not more than 360 mg of sodium per serving

The policy also requires that at least one item meeting the snack criteria in each vending machine shall also meet the FDA definition of "low sodium" (less than 140 mg per serving). Further, the policy recommends that vending machine options contain items that include at least 2 grams of dietary fiber. In addition, the policy states that items that meet nutrition standards shall not be priced higher than the items that do not meet the standards.

Finally, the policy stipulates that advertising on vending machines shall include advertising only of beverages and foods that meet the nutrition standards.

The policy is available on the website of the Greater San Diego Recreation and Parks Coalition for Health and Wellness, www.goplaygetfit.com and on the San Diego Nutrition Network site at www.sdnonline.org.

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Key Steps Undertaken to Get Policy Adopted

- In the summer of 2005, staff of the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) attended a summit sponsored by the National Parks and Recreation Association where the important role parks departments could play in combating childhood obesity was highlighted.
- In May of 2005 the San Diego Nutrition Network (SDNN) formed a vending machine policy subcommittee; DPR staff learned about the subcommittee and began attending the meetings.
- In the summer of 2005, the SDNN conducted a literature search of successfully implemented vending policies (see Vending Machine Toolbox Kit at www.sdnnonline.org).
- In the fall of 2005, DPR staff asked SDNN members with expertise in nutrition for information about healthy vending best practices and ideas about issues that might be included in a healthy vending policy.
- In January 2006, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors adopted a Childhood Obesity Action Plan, a plan which calls on government, business and schools to address childhood obesity.
- In the spring of 2006, DPR staff drafted a vending machine policy for DPR based on expertise from SDNN members, information from the SDNN literature search, and the standards of SB 12 and SB 19. DPR staff sought advice about specific nutrition standards, advertising limitations and pricing structures from the SDNN as it developed its policy.
- DPR staff presented the draft policy to the DPR Director; the director signed the policy in March 2006.
- After the policy was adopted DPR staff contacted vendors explaining that new policy must be implemented in spring 2006. Companies not complying with the policy will not have contracts renewed.

Lessons Learned

- Increased communication among health-related coalitions and nutrition collaboratives is essential to ensure that policies reflect sound nutrition knowledge.
- To guarantee that vending policies communicate the same wellness message it is important to align county policies with school nutrition standards.
- Findings from the literature search were instrumental in gaining the support of key decision makers in the parks and recreation department.
- The Childhood Obesity Action Plan provided strong rationale to the DPR director to adopt a healthy vending policy.
- The decision to include different standards for food and beverages - 100% of food and beverages sold in facilities most often used by children and youth must be healthy and 50% of food and beverages sold in facilities used by adults must be healthy - helped gain acceptance for the policy and ensured that the DPR policy conformed to the school policy.

Contact Information

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