



# ADVOCACY NEWS

## ADVOCACY ACTION

### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY CENTERED AROUND NUTRITION

*YOU can make a difference today!*

One common trend the OAC has begun to see at both the state and federal levels is legislation attempting to influence food choices. In general, we support these efforts and encourage our membership to get involved and support initiatives to help individuals make more nutritional food choices.

#### **State Legislation**

Two main areas of focus seem to dominate legislation around nutrition at the state level. The first is the banning of trans fats. Trans fats, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), are known to increase the levels of “bad” cholesterol, while decreasing “good” cholesterol. A number of cities have led the way in encouraging trans fat bans, but now we are also seeing a trend toward this type of legislation at the state level.

California has already passed their trans fat ban, requiring the removal of trans fats from restaurant food by 2010 and removal from baked goods by 2011. Many other states are considering similar legislation, including: Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Washington as well as the District of Columbia.

The second area of focus is menu labeling. Again following the trend of a number of cities, most notably New York City, state legislatures are considering requiring chain restaurants to post calorie counts of their foods on menu boards and in menus so that individuals can make informed decisions about the nutritional content of their foods.

The OAC strongly supports menu labeling initiatives, as we believe they help people make informed decisions about their food choices in restaurants. As with the trans fat issue, California has already passed such legislation and many other states are proposing various degrees of menu labeling legislation, including: Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia.

If you are interested in advocating on behalf of menu labeling legislation, the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University has prepared an excellent policy brief on

the subject. You can access this brief by visiting the “Policy Reports and Briefs” section on their Web site at [www.yaleruddcenter.org](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org).

#### **Federal Legislation**

Federal legislators are actively working on nutrition issues as well. The first effort, which is actively being supported by the OAC and many other health-focused charities, is a bill (HR 1324) introduced by Rep. Lynn Woolsey of California and co-sponsored by more than 100 of her colleagues known as the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Act.

The OAC believes that efforts should be made to improve the quality of foods served and available to children throughout the school day and believes this bill is a good first step. Current laws only regulate foods served during school meal times, and the proposed bill closes the loophole that allows foods with no nutritional value or of poor quality to be sold outside of meal times in vending machines, etc. If you are interested in helping support this legislation, visit the OAC’s Legislative Action Center at [www.capwiz.com/obesityaction/home](http://www.capwiz.com/obesityaction/home) to send an e-mail to your legislators.

Another effort currently being considered by federal legislators is menu labeling legislation similar to the efforts mentioned above at the state level; however, most advocates are concerned that one of the proposed menu labeling bills at the Federal level may actually weaken tougher requirements already implemented at the city and state levels. The OAC continues to monitor this federal legislation closely and is working to make sure any federal legislation does not weaken city and state requirements.

Whether it is nutrition or any other obesity-related issue, always remember that your voice is important. Your elected officials want to hear from their constituents, especially those who are personally affected by an issue. If you feel a connection to any of the issues above, we encourage you to become an advocate and “raise your voice.”



# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
  - Community Discussion Forum
  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



**JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

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