



the majority of teens are drinking one or more sugary sodas every single day – the equivalent of 39 pounds of sugar each year from soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages!

We all realize that marketing is just one of many influences on children's diets. As a parent, I can also appreciate that getting children to eat better is no easy task. The experts at our first workshop used metaphors like "reversing the course of an ocean liner" and "stemming the tide of a tsunami." That is why we need industry's help.

As you know, the FTC looked at the children's food marketplace in 2006, just as industry, under the auspices of the Better Business Bureau, was beginning to take its first self-regulatory steps. Our comprehensive report of food marketing techniques and expenditures set the benchmark for measuring industry's efforts.

Our Report also included a number of specific recommendations to address shortcomings in those efforts. Four, in particular, frame our discussions today.

First, the FTC called *only* food and beverage companies to adhere to meaningful nutrition-based standards for foods marketed to children. To their credit, sixteen have already signed Council of Better Business Bureaus pledges. Others have taken action on their own. But many companies that market heavily to children and teens have yet to join or make a commitment.

Why, for instance, hasn't YUM! Brands, with its KFC, Taco Bell, and Pizza Hut chains, stepped up? Or Chuck E. Cheese and IHOP? Or the marketers of Air Heads and Baby Bottle Pops?

Second, companies must close the nutrition loopholes – we all know they're strategic ones – that allow foods of questionable nutritional value to be marketed to children simply because they have somewhat less sugar, fat, or salt than prior versions. Are slightly lower fat potato chips or slightly less sugary cookies really the foods we should be encouraging our kids to eat?

“Sir, if uniform standards are adopted, and they apply to all of the industries we deal with, absolutely, we will use them as a filter for all of our marketing and advertising relationships.”<sup>4</sup>

As you will hear this afternoon, we will have such a uniform framework in place by this summer. We expect Nickelodeon to honor that commitment, and we expect others to do so as well.

We are now conducting a follow up to our first study, and we will examine whether the food and media industries have acted on our recommendations. We will soon be sending out 44 subpoenas to the largest food companies to collect marketing data for 2009. We will also assess whether the nutritional quality of children’s food has improved since 2006.

We continue to believe that the food industry and children’s media are trying to effect positive change. Based on their response to date, we are hopeful that self regulation can work and that their efforts won’t fall short. But we cannot simply congratulate companies for meeting their pledges and be done with it. We need to be sure that the pledges themselves are adequate to drive real change in the marketplace and in children’s diets.

The FTC is sensitive to the First Amendment principles that govern here. It has been one of the reasons we continue to encourage an industry-driven approach. But the stakes could not be higher. If action does not come from the private sector, there are many who will call for Congress to act. And there are many in Congress who will want to do so.

As many today will note, the cost of inaction to our children’s health – not to mention the economic costs of obesity – are significant. A report this year estimated almost 10 percent of all medical spending is due to obesity



1. R