



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# Healthy Eating Research:

*Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity*

Society For Behavioral Medicine  
March 24, 2007

# RWJF Objective: Childhood Obesity



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- Help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in the U.S. by the year 2015
- Special focus on children and youth in low-income and racial/ethnic populations at highest risk
- Concentrate efforts on policy and environmental solutions

# National Concern About Children's Diets (6-18 yrs)

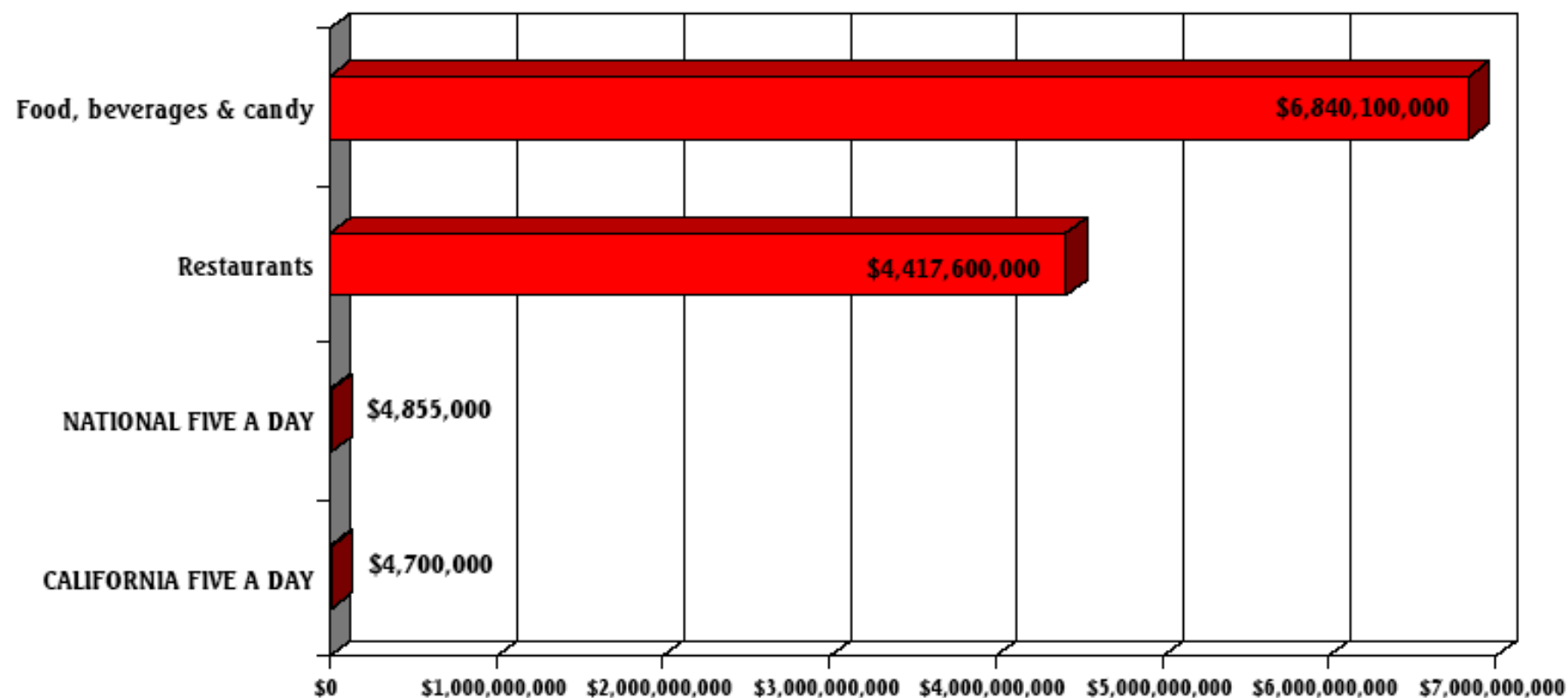
- **Only 2% meet the dietary recommendations for all food groups**
- **Percent meeting national recommendations**
  - fruit: 24%
  - vegetables: 20%
  - calcium: 30%
  - dietary fat: 25%
  - saturated fat: 16%
  - fiber: 25%
- **56-85% consume soda on any given day**
- **30% ate from a fast food place on day of survey**
- **Added sugar and fat contribute 45% of total energy intake**

# Changes in Childrens' Food Environments



- Larger portion sizes and more food eaten away from home
- 43% of elementary and 98% of high schools sell foods outside the school meal programs
- Growing income and racial/ethnic disparities in access to healthy foods— with exodus of grocery stores from urban centers and influx of fast food outlets
- Relative costs of fruits/vegetables have risen, costs of soda, sugar and fats have fallen
- Half of all ads shown during kids' TV shows are for food -- most promote high-sugar, fat and calorie products

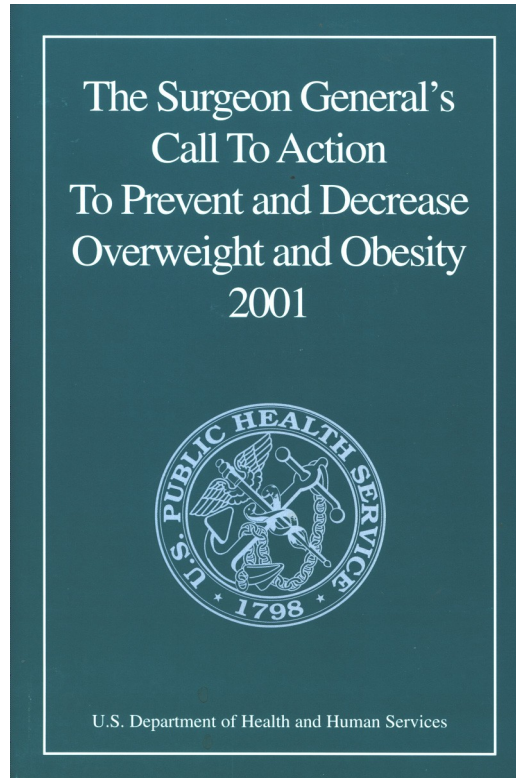
# Measured Advertising Dollars (2004) for Food, Beverages, Candy and Restaurants Compared to 5-A-Day



Source: "50th Annual 100 Leading National Advertisers", *Advertising Age*, June 27, 2005. Accessed August 5, 2005.



# Why an environmental and policy focus?



***“Individual behavior change can only occur in a supportive environment with accessible and affordable healthy food choices and opportunities for regular physical activity.”***

**Surgeon General's Call to Action, 2001**

# Child and Adolescent Obesity Studies: Summary of Program Intervention Characteristics from 1982-2003 (n=147)

---

- **Health education: diet, PA or both** 69%
- **Physical activity** 64%
- **Diet** 35%
- **Environment** 17%

- **Rationale**
- Need for environmental and policy solutions, especially for populations at highest risk
- **Aims**
- Establish strong, actionable research base to guide decision- and policy-makers
- Build a transdisciplinary field and a diverse network of researchers
- Make a difference – identify solutions, rapidly communicate results

# Major Program Features: 5 years, \$16



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- **Direction, technical assistance and field-building**
  - National Program Office
  - Senior Program Advisors
- **Investigator-initiated studies**
  - Solution-oriented, transdisciplinary
  - Large and small grants
  - First Call for Proposals was Dec 2005
- **Diversity promotion awards program**
- **Strategic communications component**
  - Engage end-users up front
  - Rapidly communicate findings
- **Evaluate program success and impact**

# What Do We Mean by Food Environments?



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Environment: “anything and everything outside the person”

- **Physical and economic environments: availability, costs, price, promotion, placement – access, availability, affordability**
- **Information environments: media, marketing, public education (e.g., point-of-purchase information)**
- **Sociocultural environments: social and cultural norms, role models, social support for health behavior change**
- **Political and policy environments: rules and regulations**
- **Behavioral settings: schools, homes, neighborhoods, child care centers, grocery and convenience stores, restaurants**



- Studies to identify and evaluate promising food environment and policy changes with potential to prevent obesity among children
  - 12- to 18-month awards up to \$100,000 each
  - 18- to 36-month awards up to \$400,000 each
- Analyses of macro-level policy or system determinants of food environments and policies
  - 12- to 18-month awards up to \$75,000 each


# Healthy Eating Research: Call for Proposals



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

THE  
ROBERT WOOD  
JOHNSON  
FOUNDATION

**Healthy Eating Research:**  
Building Evidence to Prevent  
Childhood Obesity




Round 1: School Food  
Policies and Environments

Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline  
March 7, 2006

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Healthy Eating Research:**  
Building Evidence to Prevent  
Childhood Obesity



2006 Call for Proposals – Round 2

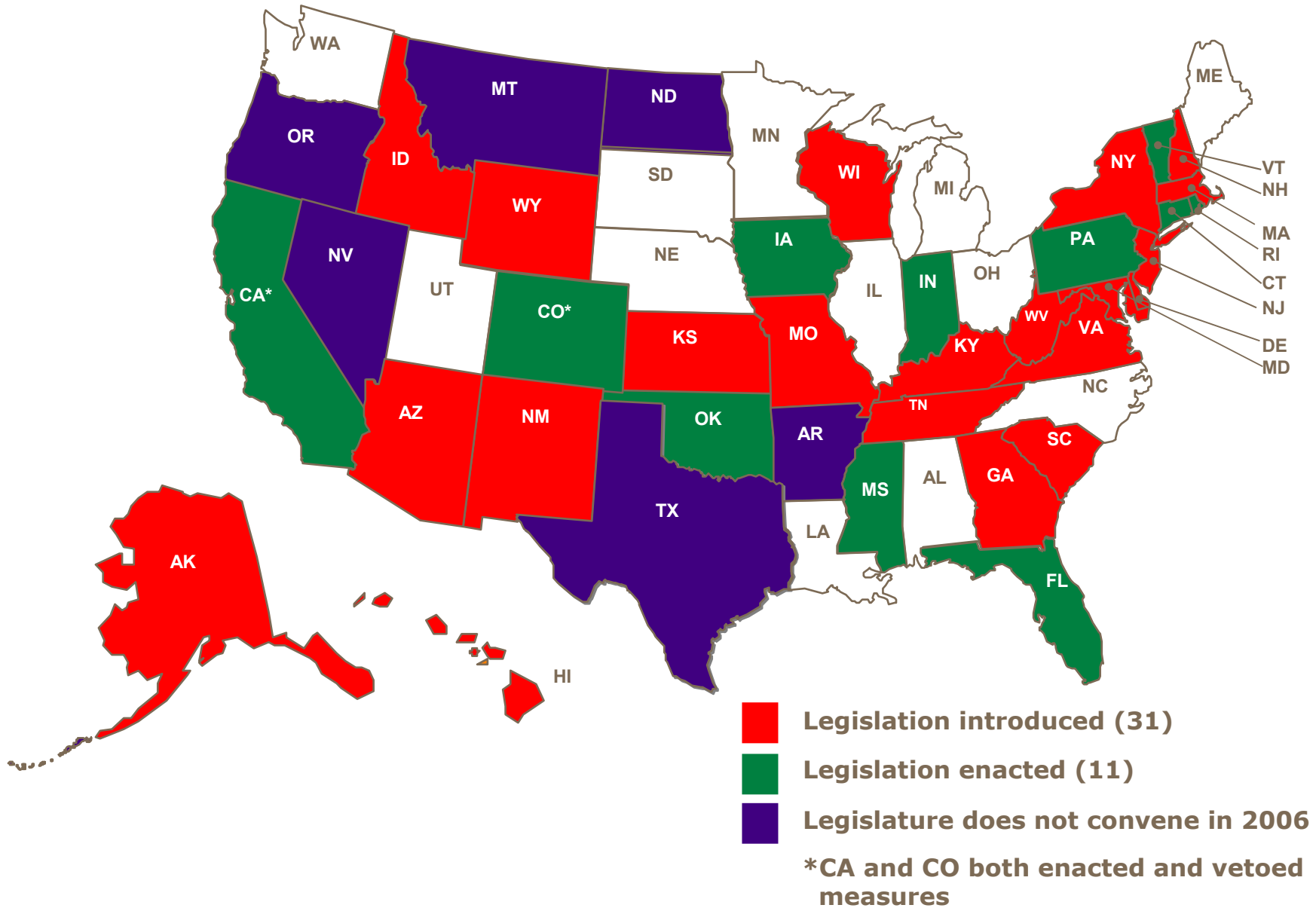
Proposal Deadline  
February 13, 2007

# State Legislative Initiatives to Improve School Nutrition

---

	2004	2005	2006
<b>Number of States introducing measures</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Number of States enacting measures</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>

# 2006 School Nutrition Legislation



# Round 1 Call for Proposals



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- Focused exclusively on the school setting
- 160 proposals received
- 14 grants were awarded in June 2006, totaling \$3 million
  - 8 grants examine the impact of school food policies (CA, CO, CT, GA, ME, NC, PA, WA)
  - 2 grants utilize national datasets and examine the determinants and impact of school policies
  - 4 macro-level policy analyses of larger, upstream influences

# Round 1: Healthy Eating Research Grants Awarded

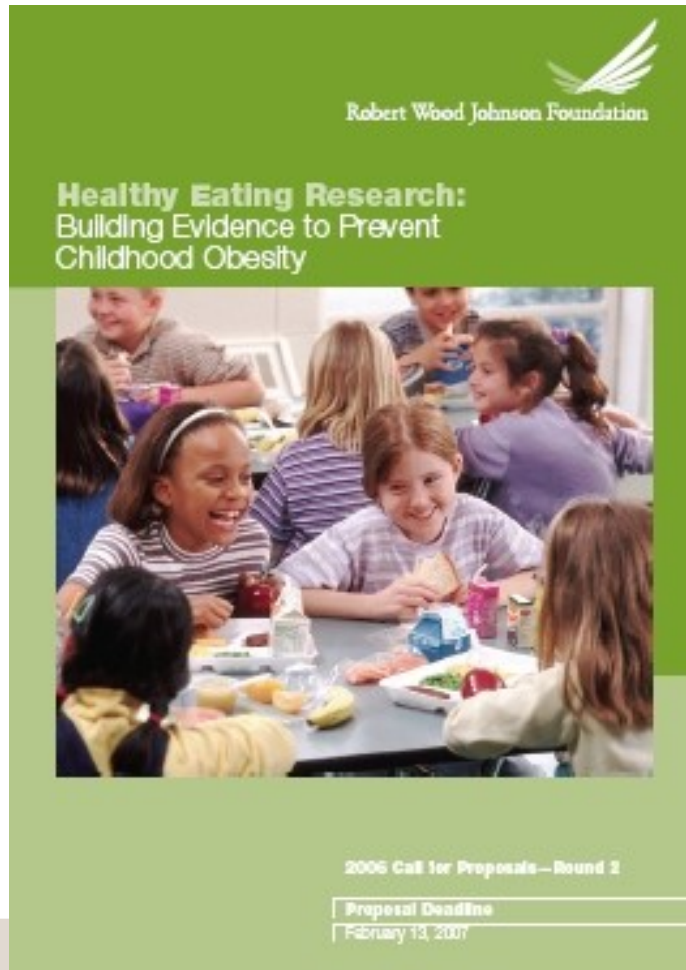
---

- **Examining the child nutrition commodity food program in school meals**
- **Improving the school food environment: legal obstacles and opportunities**
- **Legal tools to address the availability and marketing of competitive foods in schools**
- **A national study of school food environments and policies and their relationship to diet and obesity among students (SNDA-III)**
- **Food policies and environments in and around elementary schools and relationships with food consumption and BMI (ECLS-K)**
- **Impact of Maine's state-wide rule on school nutrition environments and students' dietary behaviors**
- **School nutrition standards policy implementation in NC: Economic and financial impact**

# Round 2 Call for Proposals



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



- Focused on children's food environments and policies in: preschool, child-care, school and after-school environments, and nearby food outlets
- Call for Proposals closed February 13, 2007
- \$3 million in grants will be awarded September 2007



# Future Healthy Eating Research Calls for Proposals (CFPs)

- Future CFPs:
  - Access to healthy/affordable foods in low-income communities
  - Food marketing and advertising to children
  - Agricultural policies, tax policies, economic incentives
- **Round 3 CFP expected December 2007**

# New Healthy Eating Research Funding Opportunity: New Connections Junior Investigator Grants

- A new collaboration with the RWJF New Connections Initiative
- New Connections *junior investigator* childhood obesity-related grants awarded through the Healthy Eating Research program
- For investigators who:
  - received their doctorate or terminal degree in the last 7 years
  - are from historically disadvantaged/underrepresented groups
    - Ethnic and racial minorities
    - Individuals from low-income communities
    - First-generation college graduates

**Next funding opportunity expected December 2007**



**Wingspread Meeting March 7-9, 2007**  
**Contributions of U.S. Food and Agricultural Policy**  
**to the Obesity Epidemic: Opportunities and**  
**Recommendations**



## For More Information

- **Healthy Eating Research Web site**  
[www.healthyeatingresearch.org](http://www.healthyeatingresearch.org)
- **Email:** [HealthyEating@umn.edu](mailto:HealthyEating@umn.edu)
- **Phone:** 1-800-578-8636