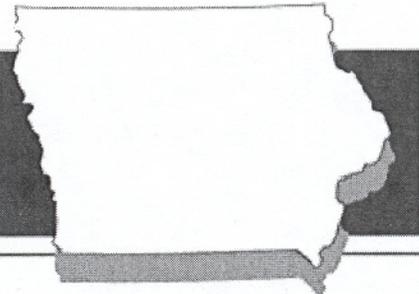


U.S. Senator

**TOM HARKIN** OF IOWA



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 21, 2007

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## **HARKIN APPLAUDS LAUNCH OF TASK FORCE ON MEDIA AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

*Sees promise for combating growing epidemic through innovative  
Public-private partnership*

**WASHINGTON D.C.** -- Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) applauded today's launch of the **Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity**, an innovative public-private partnership aimed at combating the clear and present health dangers stemming from poor nutrition and childhood obesity.

"Let there be no doubt: the rise in childhood obesity is a real threat to our public health," **said Harkin**. "I hope this task force can be a successful starting point for an independent, rigorous system of recommendations so that we can curb the junk food marketing aimed at our kids. With the health of our children at stake, our entire society must do its part because the time to act together is now."

Twenty-five percent of children between the ages of five and 10 already show the early-warning signs of heart disease. Poor nutrition early on in life has also led to increased cases of adult-onset diabetes in kids, something that used to be extraordinarily rare. In order to help confront this crisis, Harkin hopes that this group can set clear strategies and objectives, and collaborate on voluntary industry initiatives that will help reduce the onslaught of junk food marketing towards our kids.

"The stakes here are high," **said Harkin**. "We each have a role to play in this effort and have a unique chance to help promote healthier lifestyles for our kids. I urge each member of this task force to maximize this opportunity and work to produce real results for parents and children."

Harkin joined Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin, and FCC Commissioners Michael Copps and Deborah Tate to create the bipartisan task force in January 2007.

Harkin is the Senate leader in promoting wellness initiatives that can help Americans live healthier lives and reduce spiraling healthcare costs. Harkin has introduced the Healthy Lifestyles and Prevention (HeLP) America Act, comprehensive legislation that seeks to combat obesity and other preventable chronic conditions by providing all sectors – schools, workplaces, and communities – with the tools and incentives they need to make America a healthier place. Harkin is also the author of the Harkin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. The program – which operates in eight states and on three Indian reservations – provides free, fresh fruits and vegetables to children in schools.

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