



**Remarks of Mary Sophos  
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Before the Joint Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity  
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. It is a pleasure to be here today, and it is encouraging to see the impressive talent that has assembled to join us in an important cause that the food industry has made it one of its top priorities – the health and wellness of our consumers.

As I look around the room I see many veterans in that cause—from food and beverage manufacturers to advertisers, media, educators, government and many other industry and public interest groups. And I am encouraged to see new recruits.

Every one of you and every sector you represent is critical to the cause.

The Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association is the largest trade association representing the world's leading food, beverage and consumer packaged goods companies. At GMA/FPA we declared our goal years ago, and it remains the same today:

- We are committed to helping Americans live healthier lifestyles. The industry recognizes that it can help improve the situation by providing a wider range of nutritious product choices and marketing these choices in ways that promote healthy lifestyles.

That commitment has led to a revolution in food manufacturing and marketing. Over the last five years:

- Our member companies have introduced about 10,000 products that are new or offer improved health profiles.
- They have reduced saturated fat in over 3,500,
- Reduced trans fats in nearly 3,000,
- Reduced calories in over 1,000.

And how do people find ten thousand new and improved products? Overwhelmingly, the information is carried from the media represented here today – TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and websites will carry messages about the healthy and tasty choices to millions of consumers in homes across the country. GMA/FPA members strive to deliver messages that are ethical and accurate. And we have systems in place to make sure we succeed. We've always had the best voluntary system of self-regulation in the world, and the Council of Better Business Bureaus has just made it better. GMA/FPA is a proud

supporter of Children's Advertising Review Unit and participated in the recent modernization and strengthening of the CARU guidelines.

Our members have been challenged to do even more with our marketing, and we are answering the call. Chairman Majoras of the Federal Trade Commission recently said marketing can be part of the solution, and we agree. Food and beverage advertisers accounting for over two-thirds of all TV advertising to children under 12 have announced their commitment to devote the majority of their messages to healthy choices and lifestyles. Spearheaded by Steve Cole, Jodie Bernstein and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative is a voluntary self-regulation program designed to shift the mix of advertising messages to children to encourage healthier dietary choices and healthy lifestyles. These principles will also apply to interactive games and use of third-party licensed characters. Also under this Initiative, companies have committed not to advertise food or beverage products in elementary schools.

The food and beverage industry is also working with the Ad Council on their new campaign with the Department of Health and Human Resources and media groups to bring important messages to parents and kids about health, nutrition and physical activity. In fact, many companies will be supporting those broadcast and print messages through their marketing and promotion activities.

We all know that marketing will only be a part of the solution. And the food industry will be only one of the important groups working for it. Every public health authority that has spoken on the subject – CDC, the Surgeon General, HHS, WHO – has told us that success will depend on an unprecedented partnership of stakeholders from all sectors of society. We need to join forces, and GMA/FPA members know from experience that we can achieve great results when we do.

We asked fifty GMA/FPA members what they were doing in the area of health and wellness, and over three quarters of them told us that they are conducting consumer health promotions in local communities and partnering with public health organizations. Nearly 90% of the companies surveyed support national or local health and wellness initiatives. In the last three years GMA/FPA members have contributed over 100 million dollars for nutrition and health-related activities and grants to communities. Let me give you just a few examples:

- All of the companies serving on the FCC task force sponsor the Ad Council's Coalition for Healthy Children: Combating Childhood Obesity campaign
- "Triple Play" program –A \$12 million joint health and nutrition program held in partnership with Kraft, Coca-Cola and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.
- General Mills sponsors the Champions for Healthy Kids – A program that awards 50 grants of \$10,000 each to grassroots organizations each year to support innovative efforts that teach and promote youth nutrition and fitness habits. The program will celebrate its 5th anniversary this year and has committed \$8,000,000 over the past four years.
- Kraft partners with the National Latino Children's Institute in "Salsa, Sabor y Salud," a healthy lifestyle course for Latino families in the U.S.
- Kellogg Company sponsors Earn Your Stripes—an initiative that is designed to help kids build their confidence, stay fit and at the same time have fun.

- PepsiCo, Kellogg Company and General Mills are corporate sponsors of the Partnership for Play Every Day a collaboration convened by the YMCA of the USA, National Recreation and Park Association and National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Its focus is to bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors to advance policies, programs and practices that ensure all children and youth engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Dannon awarded to selected community organizations the first “Dannon Next Generation Nutrition Grants” which support improvement in children’s nutrition education
- Hershey sponsors the Hershey’s Track and Field Games, the longest-running youth fitness program of its kind in North America. In 2007, Hershey will conduct a sustained awareness-building campaign with the National Recreation and Park Association to encourage increased youth participation in the program’s local and state-level events.
- Many companies sponsor The President’s Council on Physical Fitness, local YMCAs, numerous walks, races and community sports events such as America on the Move, Susan G Koman Race for the Cure and AHA’s Heart Walk

Let me spend a little more time telling you about one particular partnership that I think has great promise. It combines the two most basic elements of a healthy lifestyle – nutrition and physical education.

In 2007, the American Council for Fitness and Nutrition Foundation, which was founded by food and beverage manufacturers to promote healthier lifestyles, will conduct a pilot program in schools in the greater Kansas City metro area in partnership with PE4Life and the American Dietetic Association Foundation. The school pilot will implement a cross discipline “energy balance” approach that focuses both on energy intake and energy expenditure. Physical education teachers and nutrition professionals will work side by side in the schools to implement strategies to get the students to be more active and to eat a more balanced and nutritious diet. The lessons learned from the pilot will allow us to create a blueprint for student health and wellness that could be replicated in schools across America.

In closing, I would like to say that we look forward to participating and to the dialogue. I have talked a great deal about partnerships because I think that is one of the unique opportunities this Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity affords us and because it is only by working in partnership that we will achieve the goal that we all share – health and fitness for our kids and ourselves.

Thank you.