



NEWS RELEASE

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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State Launches New Teen-Focused Obesity Prevention Campaign

HONOLULU – During a special premiere at the State Capitol, Gov. Neil Abercrombie and the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) today launched a new teen-focused multi-media campaign to combat obesity. The campaign is part of a comprehensive set of interventions being implemented by the DOH to address obesity prevention.

Students, legislators, media and obesity prevention advocates were provided a preview of many of the television, radio, print and movie theater ads that will run statewide. The campaign will begin on Feb. 15 and run through May to reach youth ages 12-18. The campaign will also utilize social media outlets to reach the target audience.

“It is essential that these messages resonate, starting with Hawaii’s teens, so we enlisted their help in creatively developing how they will be presented,” said Gov. Abercrombie. “This campaign represents an ideal nexus of state government working with local students to ensure that public information messages intended for teens are effective and impactful.”

The campaign’s TV, radio and print ads were produced with the help of Hawaii middle and high school students. After initial focus group testing with teens to determine the concept, 10th graders from Island Pacific Academy acted as youth advisers for the campaign, advising DOH staff on the look and feel of the logos and print ads.

In addition, the theater ads were entirely student-produced videos submitted by Aikahi Elementary, Aliamanu Middle, and Waianae High Schools, which were finalists in the 2012 Olelo Youth XChange video competition.

“The campaign counters the attractive promotion of unhealthy foods and drinks that are popular with our teens,” said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. “Our goal is to begin the conversation with our youth on how marketing influences their over-consumption. We have found that Hawaii teenagers have a great deal of purchasing power, so it’s important that they are made aware of how their decisions are swayed.”

Consumption of some unhealthy items, such as sugary drinks, is highest in the teen population, with nearly all teens (93 percent) reporting consumption within the past week. One-half (48 percent) reported consuming of at least one sugar-sweetened beverage per day.

A 2012 survey of over 600 Hawaii teenagers also found that 63 percent of teens have more than \$11 each week to spend any way they want to; over one-half of these had more than \$20 of disposable income each week.

While 27 percent of high school students are currently overweight and obese, the figure is much higher among adults at 57 percent – more than one of every two adults. “With overweight and obesity rates more than double between high school and adulthood, it is important to address the issue with teens while they’re young and before they grow into adults,” added Director Fuddy.

Marketing messages around healthy eating and active living is a nationally recognized strategy to address obesity, and it is fundamental part of the Hawaii State Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan. The state’s media campaign is integral to a comprehensive effort to reduce obesity and the chronic disease in Hawaii. The theater, television, radio, and print ads are funded with Tobacco Settlement funds.

View the campaign’s TV and theater ads here:

<http://www.youtube.com/startlivinghealthyhi>

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