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Excerpts and Summary of the 37th Hunger and Nutrition Forum

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The following is a summary of the reports made at the forum compiled by Edie Jessup and Carey Berend.

Focus: Soda in the Schools

How Can the Community Help the Schools Transition and end selling sodas to kids?

HUNGER AND NUTRITION FORUM

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Edie Jessup, Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger Project Coordinator welcomed people to the Forum. Forum participants introduced themselves. The Packet was reviewed.

Edie Jessup: Thank you all very much. The a summary of SB 677, which has really provoked this particular forum. SB677 changes California Law, and Elementary and Middle schools no longer will be allowed to have sodas on campus. Included is a short survey that Metro did this month so that we'd have some information about where Fresno Unified Middle Schools are at this time with vending sodas. We know that Sequoia Middle School and a couple of others have already changed their vending policies, and we're very pleased. It means that the district does have some experience. **However, we were unable to get a response from most of the middle schools.** Phoua Moua will present those results following our speakers. There is a website address where there is School Foods Tool Kit - <http://cspinet.org/schoolfood/index.html>. This is put out by the Center for Science in the Public Interest and it has some information that we might be able to use here as we discuss how the community can support our schools in making changes. Of course, the Tool Kit is something that is **intended to be adapted**. This forum is the beginning of taking a look at what it is we need to do here in Fresno. There are some things that are already in place in our school district. We are pleased that that Fresno is ahead of the game in some ways. .

I am pleased to introduce Dr. **Clarence Chau, DDS**. We have asked Dr. Clarence Chau, a dentist here in Fresno with the Fresno-Madera Dental Society, to come and talk about the impact of soda on dental health. **One of the things that we do know is many children in Fresno do**

not have health insurance or dental insurance, and so the impact of soda is a big concern. Following Dr Chau, Richard Kim will present *Soft Drinks and Hard Facts* and the medical health information that we know about soft drinks; and then we will take a look at the impact of the new California Law SB677. So thank you very much, Dr. Chau.

Dr. Clarence Chau, DDS: Thank you for being here. I'm Dr. Chau from the Fresno/Madera Dental Society, and I have been asked to talk about *The effects of soda on dental health*. Well, obviously everybody here knows that soda is not a healthy food because I don't see it over there (as part of lunch). But it has been around for a long, long time. It used to be called 'soda pop' because the little gas that's inside, it really feels good to drink, and over the years the flavor, the taste of the soda has improved so much and there's so much variety of different kinds of sodas on the market. We all every day, myself included, try to stay away from soda but sometimes I cannot because **they try to get you addicted to it**. At one time they put cocaine in Coca Cola. Why? To get you addicted to it. Of course they took it out a long time ago, so don't even try to take a lot of Coca Cola to get high or something. Now also, I remember when I was a kid all the Coca Cola came in glass bottles. At that time I did not feel that it was small. Today I look at it again. How come it was so small? Maybe they have a different kind of bottle, but when I look at it, it's 8 ounces. It's about one water glass. When I was a teenager it wasn't easy to finish that one glass of Coke. It took a long time. Now, most of you have gone through McDonald's right? You've have seen the small, medium, and large sizes. **Today's small is yesterday's medium size. Even the kids are given more than 8 ounces or 12 ounces, and then most of us get the medium, which is 16 oz. or more.** They even give you a bucket for it, almost a gallon for like 15 cents more. They call it "size up" or whatever they call it.

Anyway, **soda does taste good, but it has consequences.** The amount of sugar in one glass of Coca Cola is at least a glass of granulated sugar dissolved in it. Because most of these sodas are acids, and so they are very acidic. To give you an example, **the most acidic one is Pepsi. Pepsi is always sweeter and more acidic than Coca Cola.** The diet ones are a little less acidic and less sweet. Not that they want to make it healthy and less acidic, but just because if they make it so acidic they won't be able to sweeten it with artificial sweetener. I don't know how many of you understand the **pH value. That's high school chemistry or physics. PH value measures the acidity or alkalinity of the liquid. Seven is water being neutral. One is the extreme acid. Fourteen is the maximum alkaline. Pepsi has a pH value of 2.49, and the least acidic soda is called Barq's. That's root beer. It's 4.61.** So the rest are anywhere between those. **The more tasteful ones are those that are more acidic and so they have more sugar in it too. Surprisingly, there's a Nestea which is not a soda. It's supposed to be an iced tea. It still has a pH value of 3.04, which is kind of acidic.**

Now what does this acid in soda do to your teeth? I have seen a lot of teenagers, school kids, ranging from 12 to 15. The older ones have more cavities. Those are the cavities in between their teeth. Now, in the front teeth it's not that much a problem. In the back where your teeth are wider they have a wider contact area, and those are where you'll see the effects of soda. **Almost every one of them who drink two cans a day from school has all their back teeth decayed in between the teeth.** How did that happen? The tooth decay is started by bacteria using whatever food material. You have traces of sugar on your teeth. That is high-energy food for the bacteria, and it produces acid as a bi-product. The acid decays through the enamel of your teeth and then causes further decay. **Now when you have soda there, which is a strong acid, the bacteria lives in a very acidic environment plus the sugar that's**

dissolved in the acid, so acid on top of acid and more nutrition, huge amount of supply for the bacteria to produce more acid, so it will decay in no time.

One kid I came across couldn't give up the soda, but I fixed all his teeth. He told me that afterwards what he tried to do was instead of just drinking through a straw he placed a straw close to his throat so it would bypass the teeth. Well, he thinks that he got it, but I haven't seen him since then so I don't know what happened.

Once you have a decay in your tooth you can remove the decay, fill the tooth, but that's not the end of it. Several years down the road the filling material might break or deteriorate and you have to replace the filling. **When you replace a filling** by that time the wall of the tooth becomes stained and starts to have some decay so **you have to remove more tooth structure. Every time you remove decay the hole becomes bigger, and there is only certain size of the hole that you can tolerate before you'll hit the nerve and you will need a root canal and a crown, which is painful, or even lose a tooth. It's hard to teach the kids to understand that this will be the consequence, but it's a sad story.**

I'd like to share with you my own experience with the soda **back in 1983** when I was still in dental school in Georgetown University in Washington D.C. Remember the 2-liter bottles came out back then. **Back then they cost about \$2.00 a bottle. Now it's only average a dollar, so people can drink more now. They can afford more. The 2-liter bottle will become flat in a very short time, so you tend to drink more before it becomes flat.** That's what happened to me. Before the 2-liter came out I hardly flossed my teeth at all, and then as time went on in dental school we all had to floss every day to set a good example for all the patients. So I flossed diligently every day and then in the meantime was taking those 2 liter Coca Cola or 7-Up, and a year later there was a big decay in one of my teeth in between the back teeth. So that's how quick it can be. **Your flossing and brushing would not remove the acid and sugar from soda.** You just cannot.

The main thing is that we have to avoid the sodas, especially the kids, and try to make it not available to them. Some will listen. Very few will listen and cut down. Before a tooth needs a root canal, if the kid goes to the dentist regularly then it might be possible to put a crown on to avoid the root canal which would happen later, but not everybody is so lucky or they don't want to see the dentist so often as they should. **And what about those people who cannot afford a root canal? Then you have to pull the tooth out. Once you pull the tooth out if you cannot afford a root canal you cannot afford a bridge or implant or whatever. So the space is there and your teeth start to move and shift and then later on 10, 20 years down the road it will be very difficult to restore those missing teeth.**

And nutrition is affected by the ability of how you chew your food. The more teeth you have that can function and grind them to a smaller particle before you swallow the stomach tends to absorb much better. That's why people who have few teeth and are not wearing dentures don't have very good nutrition, and that directly affects the health.

Thank you for all being here and giving me a very simple topic to talk about.

Dr. Edward Moreno, Fresno County Public Health Officer: I was wondering whether we see the same type of tooth decay or problems with teeth among people who drink diet sodas?

Dr. Clarence Chau: Well, diet sodas do not contain the sugar. It's artificial sweeteners, so it won't cause the decay. However, when you drink too much diet soda you have a funny taste in your mouth and that will make you want to eat something sweet or some other things, so if you

can tell yourself, “Okay, I’m not going to eat that,” and avoid following the soda with sweet food, that’s okay.

Dr. Edward Moreno: And how about the acidity in the diet sodas?

Dr. Clarence Chau: Usually diet sodas are a little less acidic than the sugared sodas. Let me give an example. **Pepsi is 2.49. Diet Pepsi is 3.05. Not much difference. A little less acidity in diet sodas.**

Edie Jessup: Thank you. Once again, **I do want to point out that with kids there are many who do not have dental insurance and who don’t end up seeing dental providers.** Thank you very much, Dr. Chau. That was very helpful.

Richard Kim is going to present “Soft Drinks and Hard Facts”. Thank you.

Richard Kim, UCSF Medical Student: Good afternoon, everyone. I originally had this on a power point, and I’m going to have to use the transparencies so they might be a little fuzzy. I have handouts. Hopefully I’ll keep you awake for the next 15 minutes.

Basically what I’m going to try to do in the next 10 or 15 minutes is bring everyone up to date on the **latest on sodas and what they contain and what they can do to you, at least from a medical perspective. The three things we’re going to talk about are an overview of obesity, how sugar is actually processed in the body, and then the latest research.**

As I’m sure almost everyone here is probably aware of, we have a new epidemic of obesity across the nation, **Obesity in children has doubled over the past few decades and in adolescence it’s tripled.** One interesting statistic I found is that **87% of overweight children become overweight adults, so the way that kids are raised really sets the tone for their adult life and the health consequences that follow.** These consequences include many of the things you’ve probably heard about: **heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes used to be called adult-onset until it started showing up in kids. The only thing that’s been associated with type 2 diabetes is that every kid who develops it is severely obese, and so this is really, really scary. Frankly, we haven’t even seen the outcomes of what it means to be a kid that has diabetes, and we’re finding out right now. Other things associated with childhood obesity include sleep apnea. That refers to the fact that if you are severely overweight you have too much tissue in your neck and it’s hard for you when you’re sleeping to keep your airway path, and so you kind of develop little micro-episodes of asphyxia. Not a good thing. You get really tired in the mornings. And depression is just from body image issues. Medical professionals are seeing this trend.**

Basically, the trend that we are drinking more soda fits perfectly in line with the projections by the soda industry, I’m sure. I have two sets of numbers. One is that **between 1977 and 1996 adolescents increased the amount of soda they drank from a can-and-a-half, which is 16 ounces, to 28 ounces a day, so it’s about almost twice as much.** If you look at across the general population **from 1970 to 1999 the average person drank from 22.2 gallons of soda a year to 55 or 56 gallons of soda a year.** I didn’t want to bring like 5 gallon bottles of water, but you can just imagine how much we’re actually drinking.

Can anyone tell me what these are? This is something I got out of a histology textbook to show you guys. **These are fat cells, yes. And the problem with fat cells is once you get them it’s really hard to get rid of them. Childhood is a time where you develop among other**

things your social patterns and also your metabolic patterns, and there is increasing evidence that's showing that how you compensate for how much you eat and how you regulate how much you eat is determined during adolescence, and so on multiple levels this is a really critical time where we really have to make sure that our kids are developing good, healthy eating habits.

Speaking of some of these eating habits, I want to go through a little bit of nutrition. All these different things up here – **sucrose, glucose, fructose – these are all sugars.** Sucrose refers to table sugar that you put in your coffee. Fructose is a sugar that you find in fruits. Glucose is the kind that we use in our bodies. **Then high-fructose corn syrup is what you see in Pepsi and soda beverages,** and then you have things like molasses and honey which are “more natural.” The key thing is that **they're all simple carbohydrates, and all simple carbohydrates are treated exactly the same. The moment they enter your body they're almost instantaneously converted into glucose,** and this is in comparison with starches and complex carbs that take a little bit longer to digest. That makes a big difference because this explains why sugar is such a poor energy source. Just to go through some of the steps of how it's metabolized, it's immediately converted into glucose, and **then your blood glucose levels rise providing a rapid burst of energy. Unfortunately, this for the most part is fairly useless.**

I have one friend who is from Bulgaria who used to be one of those weight lifters, one of those people who were in the Olympics who tries to do those things, and he told me that his coach would have him drink a can of honey before he went on stage to do his thing. And so there, I guess, it makes sense if you need a rapid burst of energy, but for the rest of us just sitting at our computers typing or something it's probably not going to be all that helpful. **What happens is the pancreas senses that you have high blood sugar levels and it secretes a lot of insulin, and insulin removes the glucose from your blood and stores it in places like muscle and fat.** And so what's the net result of drinking a soda or having a lot of sugar at once? **You actually see that your blood glucose levels drop and you find yourself without energy. You basically crash. In some ways liquid refreshments that contain only sugar are almost like a drug in the onset that they work and the fact that they're not very useful.**

Just to let you know, a 12-ounce can of soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar, and then just to add onto this a 20-ounce serving of soda contains 17 teaspoons of sugar. So the next time you have a jar of sugar in front of you imagine spooning 17 teaspoons of that into a cup, filling it up with water and then adding a little bit of fizz and then you've got soda. You are drinking a lot of sugar when you have this. Now, a lot of people ask about fruit juice. What do you do about fruit juice? **Unfortunately, fruit juice tastes great because it has just as much sugar as a can of soda would. It, of course, is more nutritious because it contains vitamins, minerals, a lot of these things that soda doesn't. But in terms of actual questions about whether this might also contribute to obesity a lot of pediatricians, as Dr. Moreno would be able to attest to you, often counsel their parents not to feed their kids too much fruit juice when they're growing up. It's like giving them soda.**

Now to get to some of the medical literature. I like this cartoon because I think especially when we hear about things in the news it seems like they're just pulling one new food that we eat, one new disease, and just saying they're associated. It's not that the research is poor, but **when the media has to put them into sound bites they often oversimplify and so hopefully I'll take you through some of these studies to show what works and what doesn't.**

Just to summarize all in one slide, this is going to be a question for everyone. Increased soda intake has been shown in studies to be associated with increased levels of A) obesity, B) bone fractures in women, C) hyperactivity, D) type 2 diabetes, E) dental cavities, or F) all of the above. Actually, the answer is just obesity, and you might be saying we just heard from Dr. Chau that it causes dental cavities. The answer is it probably does, but in terms of the studies that have been shown they haven't been able to show that yet. Proving these kinds of things is a very tricky business. For example, just to explain the thing about dental cavities, if in 1970 you said you had people drinking X amount of soda and they got X amount of cavities and then in the year 2000 you find that they're drinking more soda but they have less cavities. There are a lot of other things at work such as fluoride in the water, dentists like Dr. Chau working hard to educate their patients on brushing their teeth, or drinking through straws. There are all these other compounding factors that make it difficult to just draw an association right away. You have to pick the right population so that you can show the causal relationship. Unfortunately, this is a very new field.

Only obesity has been pretty much conclusively proven to be associated. Regarding the evidence with obesity, the one study I want you guys to all remember coming out of here is this one study that was published in Lancet two years ago done by a group out of Boston Children's Hospital. Basically what they did was in 1995 they measured about 600 junior high schoolers' body mass index as well as their soda intake and they also did a lot of other survey questions like the demographics, what ethnicity they were, how much physical activity they did, things like that. Then two years later in 1997 they measured these things again and they were able to find that those who drank more sweetened beverages during that time were more likely to become obese. There is an oft-quoted statistic that if you went from drinking one can of soda a day to two cans of soda a day or from two to three or just basically increasing one category you increased your odds of becoming obese by 60%. There's one other study that was done recently and was published in the Journal of Pediatrics a couple months ago where a bunch of researchers said, "You know, why don't we do this? Why don't we have a group of kids who we'll monitor for an entire summer who drank lots of soda and then a group that didn't and see if the group that drank soda gained more weight." And they found that those with the highest soda consumption had the highest energy intake and they were the ones who gained the most weight. Now you might be wondering why they write "statistically insignificant" up there. It just means that 30 kids isn't all that much, and so you needed more people to actually prove it statistically. It doesn't mean that it wasn't true. It just means that you can't certify it yet.

(Tape bad) about the possible increased risk of bone fractures because a lot of these soda drinks contain a lot of phosphoric acid which is a lot of phosphorous, and this could reduce calcium absorption and put people at risk for osteoporosis, especially in older women. Now in kids this is a particularly big thing because adolescence is when you're developing, laying down your bones for the rest of your life. You don't build any more bone after you're 25 or 30. They're having studies that show that the more soda you drink the less milk you drink, which is not a good thing for calcium intake. Here the evidence is a little bit more shaky, though. There was one study that showed that a bunch of high school girls that drank more sodas had an increased risk of developing bone fractures, but unfortunately the study wasn't able to account for how much calcium these kids were taking so there were a lot of people who criticized this study. It

doesn't mean that they didn't show this association, but it wasn't as clean cut as, for example, the Lancet study that was done on obesity. So in other words, the verdict is still out.

Regarding some of the other things that have been attributed to soda – the question of hyperactivity. This was a surprise to me when I looked into it, and it's been surprising to everyone, but hyperactivity has not been associated with sugar intake. My favorite study is this one that was done about 20 years ago where this doctor invited 50 mothers who swore that their kids got hyper whenever they had sugar to come in, and they gave the kids a glass of water with sugar or a glass of water with just sweetener which contained no sugar, like diet soda or something, and there was absolutely no correlation with how hyper they got afterwards. It doesn't mean that, for example, caffeine which is in soda doesn't have an effect because caffeine is a known stimulant and a lot of kids who drink that have been shown in studies to have decreased alertness in the morning because they weren't able to sleep as well.

Type 2 diabetes isn't directly caused by soda. Why they develop type 2 diabetes, unfortunately, has not been correlated with how much sugar you take, but how much sugar you take in increases the amount of calories you take in which increases the chance that you'll become obese which has been shown to correlate with type 2 diabetes, so indirectly it does have an important effect.

Dental cavities – again, the studies haven't been done yet, but the ADA has gone out on record saying that we really should oppose some of these pouring contracts for having soda in schools.

In conclusion, kids are drinking more soda than ever before, sugar is a poor energy source, increased soda intake has been linked to increased levels of obesity in children, and bone fractures and dental caries may be linked to increased soda intake. That's it for me. Are there any questions?

Participant question: Hi. I'm Terry Soares, and I was reading in a text that it wasn't the sugar, accurate, in regards to hyperactivity, but they stated that the sugar affected – I believe this is right. Correct me, Linda – epinephrine and norepinephrine or the hormonal system which in a matter of hours then caused hyperactivity. Have you seen that study?

Dr. Richard Kim: I haven't seen that study. I saw a couple others related to a related question, which is some people might be actually allergic. They might have a predisposition towards being reactive to sugar. Basically there's no consensus. Some people say that they've found this in their practices. Others haven't. That's all that is really known right now.

Eddie Jessup: Any other questions? Thank you, Richard. So we have a little bit of a look at both dental and medical information about soda. In the paper today there were two soda-related articles. One was that PepsiCo profits were bubbling up to 13%. Their net income was up in the third quarter. The other was that Coke was going to pay an ex-manager who had a whistle-blowing suit against their tactics in marketing soda. So just before we go on to Billie Richardson, who is the director of Fresno Unified School District Food Services, I want to let you know that we tried to get Frank Morales, who is in charge of the soda contracts for Fresno Unified School District, to be here. He's been on vacation. Today was his first day back, and

we will bring him here to talk to us because there are some really good questions that we have about soda in the schools and what we can do. The third speaker today I asked particularly, and she will explain to you what Fresno Unified School District Food Services does and doesn't do around soda and other kinds of things. Let's go ahead and have Billie Richardson present some of what the impacts for Food Services in Fresno Unified will be and then we can have a rousing discussion of what we might need to do from here. Thank you, Billie.

Billie Richardson: Good afternoon, and thank you for inviting me today. I wanted to talk a little bit about the role that Food Service plays in the soda sales at the elementary and the middle schools. Currently most of the elementary schools do not have soda machines on campus. A few do occasionally, but the majority do not. Middle school Food Service has three canteens that we open and we do service soft drinks at a morning break and then at lunch, but it's away from the regular cafeteria and it's at the three schools that have the lowest percentage of free and reduced children that we serve meals to, so the meal count there is not real large due to the fact that they are paying students, they have discretionary funds, and they want to purchase the soft drinks and other snack foods. We do service sodas at all of our high schools. It helps generate funds. I'm just being honest with you.

The Food Service Department would be in dire trouble if we did not have some kind of revenue coming in at our high schools. We have a high percentage of free and reduced. We have 84,000 students. Out of those 44,000 are on a Provision 2, which is where it's an alternate meal-claiming procedure, and we service every child at 56 schools without any charge. They come in, they do not have to have a meal card, they do not have to have a meal application, and we service every child enrolled at those schools. Our 18 first original Provision 2 schools started in 1997-1998 school year. They're on an extension now that goes through for 2005. We have not had to re-certify them with meal applications or anything, so we feel that we're very fortunate to have...not that we're very fortunate to have that number of percentage, but there is a mechanism there for us to be able to service them without the parents having to be responsible for filling out a meal application every year. It just helps our department, and it helps every student out there be able to have a meal.

Food Service does not make policy for what is sold by the site student bodies and different things like that. This year Food Service began self-monitoring. We looked at what's been going on with the childhood obesity and the issues that are coming forth, the legislation and such, and decided that it was time for us to look at what we were offering the children. We have reduced our soda size. We offered a 32-ounce at the high schools, and that is a fountain drink with ice. We have reduced it down to one size, and that's 20, so if you have a 20-ounce and you put the ice in it you're serving about 12 ounces. We offer the 12-ounce cans, and we have offered this year some light Hostess products to reduce the calorie intake and the fat intake. We are serving Baked Lays. Instead of the regular chips we are offering the Baked Lays. So we have taken on some of the responsibility for monitoring ourselves and we plan on being in compliance with Senate Bill 677 by July of next year at our middle schools. Again, we don't do anything at elementary level.

Pat Barr from the board is here. She's aware of the legislation that has passed and so are the board and Dr. Wood. So that information is milling around, and I'm sure that they will be

looking at what's going on. I can't tell you what the decision will be, but I do believe they will look carefully at it and do what's best for Fresno Unified.

We serve 13 million meals a year, which is a large number of meals. Eighty-eight percent of those meals are served to the needy children that are qualified for free or reduced. We do not charge a co-pay for the reduced students. The USDA will allow...**(end of side A.)** One exciting piece of news. We just had the board approve a nutrition center for us. Food Service is in the process of building a new central food processing plant so that we will be able to offer additional varieties and a higher quality of food for our schools that currently receive the pre-packed satellite meals. I think that's about all I can tell you at this point unless you have some questions. I'll be happy to try and answer them. Yes?

Participant question: I have been told that when Sequoia Middle School eliminated the sodas and only sold water and the fruit juices that there was no diminution in the money accruing to the school. Do you know anything about that?

Billie Richardson: I can't tell you about the student body funds. I believe they did not lose any revenue at all coming in from their sales. They offered things that were nutritious as well as what the students wanted. We did not sell there, so I was not real involved in it. I know that we looked at our breakfast menus at the time. The principal there thought...we made sweet rolls and cinnamon rolls, and she felt those were awfully high sugar content, so we looked at what we were offering to work around their schedule.

Participant comment: I can answer that a little bit further. They did a whole campaign, so it was a whole entire changing of the motivation of a fairly small group of people, not the size of a high school or something like that, so it became an entire campaign. It became written in. They had breakfast in their rooms, they built a whole culture around it and for that reason I think there was no lack of revenue. However, if you can't build a culture around it that's the concern of the lack of revenue.

Billie Richardson: Sequoia is a Provision 2 where all children are served without charge, so it is a very needy school, probably in the 95% free and reduced, so I don't think they have the discretionary funds as some of the other students do and that may have also, I don't think they had large sales to begin with.

Participant comment: I work in the Central Valley but I have contacts throughout the state, and there are schools when there is someone who does want to make a change, and these are closed-campus schools. Billie, what are the high schools?

Billie Richardson: The high school is closed campus except for the seniors that have permission to go off or parents that will sign.

Participant comment: Okay. But there have been schools at high school levels and entire districts who have been able to make the changeover to healthy beverages only and actually increase revenue because the contracting came under one individual and they still went to Coke and Pepsi but they had alternative beverages and everybody came to the table, meaning all of the

Food Service, the activities directors, the clubs, and because all of the contracts were separate Food Service brought them all under one and of course Coke or Pepsi got less but the school district got more and it actually increased sales. So it can happen but it means everybody plays by the same rules and everybody comes to the table to negotiate and share.

Billie Richardson: Exactly. And I'll just enlighten a little bit on that. When you have one contract and the whole school district has that contract, whether it be student body or whatever, the funds have to go through Food Service and that discourages sometimes site administrators and student bodies and stuff for the funds. We get the high majority of those funds. I can't remember what the percentage is, but it's a high percentage. The revenue comes to Food Service.

Participant question: So you're not splitting?

Billie Richardson: You're splitting some, but it's not the ratio that you would think that it is. I believe this was some legislation, and I won't say what it is because offhand I cannot think of it. I'll look into that, though, for you Terry. You had a question?

Participant question: Is there any degree of freedom or leeway that the individual schools at any level have in determining their own menus or what they offer at their school?

Billie Richardson: No. We in Food Service have a nutritionist who makes the menus based on the nutrient analysis as well as we follow the SHAPE California, which gives extra restrictions on it. On a daily average for the month we meet one-quarter of the RDA for breakfast and one-half of the RDA for lunch in all of the categories except occasionally we will be short on calories. Our menus are very specific towards the nutrient analysis so that we are meeting the requirements that are set forth for us.

Participant question: I have a friend whose daughter says she buys very inexpensive candy at her school and she says that the funds go to the library. Are there ways of getting revenues in some other way besides selling things to the kids, especially things that are unhealthy?

Billie Richardson: For clubs and organizations and that type of stuff I'm sure there are. I have not been involved in any of the fundraisers for the organizations. I know that they all do have them and it is an issue that many feel needs to be addressed.

Eddie Jessup: Yes, and that is something that Food Service itself is not in charge of. I think that maybe this is a good time to clarify that the beverage contracts at Fresno Unified are not handled through Food Service. They are handled through the Purchasing Department. Frank Morales was on vacation, and he's the director. I can report to you what he did tell me this morning so it might clarify as we discuss this a little bit. He said this morning that he couldn't give me the information as to how many middle schools did have soda contracts and didn't. He did say that off the top of his head only Sequoia had changed to healthier vending, and that was several years ago. He said that the district will be letting an RFP to vending machine contractors and asking for a response essentially by the end of this month to recast their vending with juice and water and healthier things so that they will be in compliance with the new law. He said that the

majority will change immediately and he anticipates that by January that the beverages contracts will not offer sodas in the middle schools. Now, this is the part that's tricky because it sounds like you have some vending.

Billie Richardson: That is correct.

Eddie Jessup: Food Services has some vending, but the individual schools in Fresno Unified are the ones that make the decision about what kind of vending they're going to have. And so the decisions are made by the school. The principal makes those contracts individually is what I understand, so it's school-by-school and it's under fundraising, not under Food Service.

Billie Richardson: And I think some of those are done by the School Site Council. They are the ones that decide.

Eddie Jessup: Yes. Now the part that is tricky and that we really need to have Frank here a little bit more, I think, to find out, but the district lets the RFP but the individual schools do the actual contracting. The problem from some of our perspectives is that this means that there doesn't have to be a public hearing because it's being done school by school. If the whole district were to make the contract there would have to be a public hearing. I think that the issue is, and I asked about that with Frank and we really need to have Frank here to talk to the point, but it is a little bit of a loophole. When I asked why the district lets the RFP and yet the schools individually contract with the vendors he said that it was a courtesy, kind of, and that schools are in the business of education and the business office could handle the business parts of it for them. But our concern, I think, and we need to pursue the details of this more, is that it avoids having to have a public hearing about the vending. The contracting is done through the individual schools, so it is a kind of a disconnect with that and it means that there doesn't have to be prior notice that the contract is being done and there doesn't have to be public input. So that's the issue, I think, given that we are facing the obesity problem that we have, so that is a tricky thing and we need Frank here to talk to us more about it.

Participant question: Did he indicate to you the total amount of revenue coming in? Can we get that information?

Eddie Jessup: The information must be there and on record. Billie, I guess now that we've had you sit down there was one other little piece that I wanted to ask you. So we're talking about beverages contracts at this point in time, and Food Services does the contracting with corporate alternative, what's the word?

Billie Richardson: We do an open PO for our soft drinks and we have different vendors. We have Coke and Pepsi depending on what drinks we order from whom. The Minute Maid is through Coke and then we have Gatorade through another, and so we offer a variety of drinks.

Eddie Jessup: My other question, though, is about corporate contracts with competitive foods.

Billie Richardson: Okay, are you talking about our Pizza Huts, that type of stuff? We do vend with four outside vendors. We have Chinese food at Oriental Express and the students seem to

really like that. We have Subway Sandwiches that we bring in for sale, and we have pizza, two vendors. We bring those in. We pay a price and then we sell them to the students for ala carte. They're not part of the lunch.

Eddie Jessup: Okay, thank you. And Food Service is in charge of those contracts?

Billie Richardson: Yes.

Eddie Jessup: Okay, and do you have any kind of reviewing...well, I'll get back to you, but, our purple ribbon commission that we'd like to have on food quality.

Participant question: Billie, what I was wondering is I know contractors like Pizza Hut or Dominos are willing to reduce the fat, and Subway certainly can because they sell it that way. Even though it's ala carte we're still feeding children. Does Marissa, who is...you haven't looked at that data? Is that something maybe that can be...?

Billie Richardson: (Inaudible.) Anything we purchase we do taste testing with our students and we don't buy anything unless it is student approved. We have a food show once a year where anywhere up to 50 to 75 vendors come in and it's open to the public. Every student can come, their parents, teachers, anyone, and we have up to 1100 come through that day. It's on a Saturday, and it's very beneficial.

Eddie Jessup: Great. We'll look forward to knowing when that happens. I think that one of the things that we can see is how complex this is and that there are different issues and there's a difference between good food for kids and how that gets to them and all of that and a difference between that and having to raise money for the schools, and those two things are the things that are most commonly raised as issues, the quality issue and then the whole fundraising aspect. Certainly, because there's some contracting through Food Services and some that is contracted through the individual school sites it even gets more complex, and I think that with the assistance of folks that we will pursue some of that information, and perhaps on your evaluations if you have specific questions about that if you'd write those down that would be a really great way for us to begin to compile some of the specific questions that we have.

I would like to have Phoua present...we attempted to do a quick survey on middle schools. When we found that the elementary schools on the whole weren't vending sodas two weeks ago we began trying to do a quick soda survey with the middle schools, and Phoua is going to present that information to us.

Phoua Moua: As we have been talking, on September 17 the state ban on school soda sales became a law for elementary schools and middle schools. That was SB 677. That was the center of Debra Ortiz's bill, and it was also called the California Childhood Obesity Prevention Act. I've always known it as the Soda Ban Act, but that was also part of a national effort, I mean, part of a Californian but national effort by legislators and advocates to improve the nutrition environment for students that are fighting a growing obesity epidemic. So that's what was happening this past year, and because of that we as Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger and Nutrition Project wanted to look at Fresno Unified School District, which is the fourth largest school

district in California. We wanted to look at the middle schools because we've been told by the administrators that there are no sodas in elementary schools. So we wanted to look at the middle schools to see what they had selling in the schools, what contracts they had and how much they were and what are the portions, basically. We developed a small survey, pretty brief, and me and an intern, **Ping Lee**, one of our Fresno State interns that helped me with this, used a kind of script that we wrote out and called each school, all 15 middle schools in Fresno Unified School District to ask them to participate in this survey. In the three weeks that I've been working on this I got two completed surveys, and they were from Carver Academy and Cooper Middle. I got two schools that said they've already banned sodas for the past two years. One of them is, as we all know, Sequoia Middle School, and the other one is Wawona Middle. I don't know too much about that one, but we will look into it. I've got one that responded that soda contract was through the Purchasing Department, so I was referred there, and that was Yosemite Middle, and then I got one that did not want to participate in my survey, but later on I was looking through the Fresno Unified School District website and found something interesting about that school, too, and that was Computech, and I'll get back to that. I left nine messages to principals, vice-principals, and any person that was saying that they were the person that was in charge of soda contracts in the schools. We called each of those twice during the time period that we were doing this survey, and I was not able to get a response other than the ones that I've already got previously. So what I've compiled and you guys have in your packet is kind of just a side-by-side look at the two surveys that I got back. One thing that was interesting for me when I was looking at the Fresno Unified School District page 2 was Carver Academy. Coca Cola and Pepsi as vendors sponsor different educational programs and help out in low-income communities and in low-income schools, and Carver Academy was one of those schools that Coca Cola had held an after-school program which was, I guess, an educational technology program and was a state model for after-school programs. That's one of the interesting things that I found. The contract at Carver is with Coke. Both Carver and Cooper were with Coke, and they told me they have a variety of drinks that they sold. One of the things that was interesting with Carver, though, was that when I got down to when can kids buy soda they said they were only for staff, so only the staff can get the sodas. But in Cooper, I think, they sell it before school, after school, and at lunch, and we know with SB 677 that probably would change. One of the interesting things that I found with this survey just with the two schools is that the most unhealthy drinks, I guess for the purpose of this forum we would say, are also the cheapest. Some of the more healthier drinks that would have probably just as much sugar but would also have more nutrients in it cost a little bit more. They ran from \$1.00 to \$1.25. The experience that I had in doing this survey was interesting. I called a bunch of people after. I called all the schools. I also contacted the district and I first went to the superintendent's office to just kind of give me a map of where, which department I should call, and many times I was referred to Food Service and Purchasing Department. Of course, the two things that I ran into there was I talked to Billie and she said, "Well, we don't do soda contracts." And then I called Purchasing and Frank was on vacation, so I was not able to get any other information other than what Edie had gotten this morning from him, and hopefully we will have him here at one time to maybe discuss that further. But I also went through Health Services, K-8 Instruction, I tried a route to Parent Engagement Center thinking maybe if parents had asked how they would direct them, and then I also went to the Fresno Unified School District information officer, and of course, all of them had directed me towards Purchasing. That's kind of where my small sampling ended was at

Purchasing and then with the comments and the conversation that Edie had with Frank this morning. If you have any questions I am free to answer.

Participant question: Did Carver indicate to you that there was no vending machine there on campus?

Phoua Moua: Carver?

Participant comment: Uh huh.

Phoua Moua: Carver...

Participant comment: ...has three vending machines.

Phoua Moua: We just talked about what sodas were on there, but like I said before, when we talked about when can kids get them they said it was only for staff, so the person that had answered the phone and was willing to give me this information had just told me it was only for staff.

Edie Jessup: So it looks like perhaps we need to make some site visits to kind of take a look also.

Edward Moreno: Phoua, I just want to tell you that I know what it's like to try to get information out of some institutions and agencies. I guess we can probably look to you now as the point person because you've been through all that and you kind of have an idea of some short cuts maybe next time. This is an interesting situation when I think about it because we know that the law is supposed to take effect and when everyone needs to comply by implementing the law and the regulations. Knowing that ahead of time, it seems like it gives us an opportunity to perhaps study or test our assumptions about the effect of the sale of sodas in the schools. Specifically what I'm thinking about is if we know that everyone needs to comply by summer of next year that gives us several months to consider having the schools measure certain parameters about our children before and after the implementation, so looking at working with the schools to look at, for example, weights and BMIs before the implementation and then looking at those same parameters over the course of maybe 6 to 12 months afterwards to see if there is significant difference among the students individually and as cohorts among the different schools. I was wondering if this is something that Metro Ministry might be willing to collaborate with schools and maybe other institutions, the Health Department or USCF Fresno or Fresno State, to look at this.

Participant comment: The nurses at Fresno Unified are currently taking BMIs at eight schools that receive federal funding and so because that is already being conducted at those sites **Elaine Byer** would probably be the greatest contact, and I know she's been talking with **Sharon Owyang** who is also receiving funding to do nutrition.

Edie Jessup: I would like to say that I would really be happy to help coordinate that with you, Ed. I think that building on what is already being done and finding some way to fund the rest of the schools so that we can kind of quickly get that baseline would be just a really great thing.

I'm willing. I just returned from an American Heart Association minority summit on health disparities in Atlanta and had this sense that they need this kind of information and that they might be looking for some arenas to be maybe be able to make some of that research happen. But I think we do have that great opportunity for working together with folks who are already working on it so that it can be expanded, and finding ways to do it would be a really great thing.

Participant comment: I just want to make a couple comments. I was a Food Service director, so this issue is near and dear to my heart because I've worked in that arena. Currently and for a number of years and decades there is a competitive foods law at the federal level already but it is not being enforced, and so I need to share that because Billie can probably agree with this. What we find is that kids who have the choice of something unhealthy, be it soda or candy, will choose that typically over something healthy, and it can really damage a school lunch program. I understand that fundraisers are essential for schools but that's a whole other issue. I think we need to be aware of the fact that these laws have been expanded. They have been in existence. So does that mean that people are going to begin following them and how can we do that? I do have lists of alternative fundraisers that I would be happy to share with individuals. There are many different ways. We just talked about one right now, so if people would like that I'd be happy to give them my card.

Billie Richardson: On the competitive food law there is stature there that does allow for competitive food, but there is no bones to it, no backbone, no nothing. There are no physical sanctions against anyone that doesn't. Twenty years ago we did have a competitive food bill that allowed us to monitor and not have all of the sales going on at the schools. That is not the case now because there are no fiscal sanctions for anybody breaking those rules. It's just a rule or a regulation. It's now law.

Eddie Jessup: I think that we need to get the clarity on that, and I would suggest that the issue and particularly I think that the thorny one does become the fundraising, as a matter of fact, because that starts driving the whole issue, and I think that it is high time, and I would like to invite all of your participation in beginning to look at a Fresno-designed school nutrition policy. I'd like to work with Billie because I think that we are doing a lot of wonderful things, things that are really good for our kids who are paying attention and trying to sort those things out. There are other things that impact it, though, and I think that we need to hear not only from the school district about what the challenges are but we also need to hear from parents and kids and from the medical profession particularly. That is something that they can contribute well toward. They know some of the issues that are so significant, and I think that Richard particularly in bringing up the fact that we have had such a big change in kids' nutrition status in the last 20 years that we have something on our hands that is brand new and we have such an opportunity to make changes and see changes if we look at school policy. The vending contracts are one of those that we need to look at. Without the person who's in charge of those here, though, we have a hard time really beginning to sort that out. On the access to really healthy food certainly our schools are paying attention to what the law is, but we need to find ways to enhance and make that better and really to help parents and kids begin to make some of those better choices. I think that the point about kids not being able to make those choices, I think that Frank Morales said schools are about educating kids, not about the business parts of it, and I think that that's a critical thing because by having poor choices available to them we're teaching

them something by that. Does anyone else have anything else? We're going to have to wind up. It's 1:30. I really appreciate your presence and your consideration. Please do list questions that you might have, information that we need to gather, and cohorts that we need to bring together to do more. Anyone else have last words?

Billie Richardson: I'd like to say that I will be happy to sit on any nutrition council, but I am not the decision-maker at the school. I'm not looking at you, Pat. I promise I won't. But I think that I need direction also on what kind of involvement, where I need to be. I need to look out for the national school lunch always. That's my first priority with the students at the schools for breakfast and lunch and after-school snacks and the board is very supportive of that, but I'm not going to cut my own throat, so I want you guys to understand that.

Eddie Jessup: Thank you, Billie. I think that that is honest and it's really important, also, and Billie, I do want you to continue to pay attention because my huge issue is hunger and generic poor nutrition here in this valley.

Patricia Barr: I don't think you need to be involved. I think what you need to do is get a hold of the school activity directors. The high schools and middle schools have activity directors and those are the people that actually run the fundraising at the school and then they allow different clubs and others through them to sell things, so those are the first people you're going to have to look at and find out how much of their individual budgets actually come from fundraising and then the pressures that they're under to raise funding for, for instance, extra things for the band or travel. Right now we've got Sunnyside High School. We would love to send them, but they've got to raise \$1200 a kid to go to London. They've been asked to perform. We don't have the monies to do that and so what they do, they're doing some non-food things. We're pushing non-food things as best that we can do. They've got a group that will come to any group for so many hundred dollars and they'll put a half-hour performance on for any party or meeting or whatever. It's called "All America Sings" and it's about historical songs on the United States, and they have that available. Bullard Talent does these types of things. But your regular run-of-the-mill high schools basically survive, and especially if they have competitive sports, Duncan doesn't have competitive sports so their fundraisings are a little bit different. But you've got people at each high school, so I think you're going to have to go through the activity directors.

Eddie Jessup: Thank you, and what I would be headed toward, I think, is to find some district-wide result from all of this so that it is not fractionalized. I think the other thing is the competition. I really do think that the public has to make its will known and I think that we have to address the fact that we have de-funded education resulting in this situation that we have where folks are having to raise money by selling sodas. As a community we have to recognize that's what we've done. We've created this situation where on the backs and health of children we are funding really important educational projects.

Walt Parry: I just wanted to make the comment that we always have to remember, too. There are other school districts that we also need to relate to.

Edie Jessup: Yes, and it is critical that we do address it in the variety of county food services in other districts, and yet we could make a huge impact and be a huge model if the fourth largest school district in California were to really model a unique solution to this complex problem.

Participant comment: On December 12 at Fresno County Office of Education there will be a meeting sponsored by the California Nutrition Network and it will be a meeting of those school districts that Walt was talking about. Fresno will be there too, and they're coming together to just look at this issue all day long. They're going to be looking at best practices, how can you do it. We're going to talk about fundraising and how you can make healthy choices be the option and not lose funds.

Edie Jessup: Great! I hope you'll get that information to us. Thank you all very, very much. I really appreciate it. We will continue the discussion. I will count on calling on some of you. I think that Ed has provided a great challenge to us.