



April 27, 2009

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Ms. Nancy Huehnergath
New York State Healthy Eating
and Physical Activity Alliance

Dear Nancy:

The Public Health Association of New York City (PHANYC) is pleased to join the New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance in support of the passage of S.4118 to establish nutritional standards for school foods.

Poor food choices in our schools continue to be a serious contributing factor to unhealthy lifelong eating habits. Schools are ideal places to teach and model healthful habits to children. Research shows a direct link between nutritional intake and academic performance. Unfortunately, candy, soft drinks and unhealthy food are available on many school campuses, making it difficult for our children to eat right.

Establishing nutritional standards for school foods under S.4118 has many benefits. First, NYS can take steps to improve our children's health and combat the rising childhood obesity rates and the other rates of nutritional related diseases such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. In 2003, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that nearly 21% of NYC kindergarten children are obese – startling statistics for a country dedicated to the health and well-being of our children. Second, by reducing the childhood obesity rate, nutritional standards for foods will save health care expenditures that would otherwise be spent on obesity-related services and program, resulting in a win-win for children, families and state residents.

One of the oldest affiliates of the American Public Health Association, PHANYC is the largest association of public health professionals in New York. PHANYC has identified improving school health and fighting obesity as its two leading policy priorities, and is pleased to join the New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance in its support of the passage of S.4118.

Please contact Lois Uttley at 212-870-2010 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lois Uttley, MPP
Chair, Policy and Legislative Committee