ASSEMBLYMAN

2015 Legislative Newsletter

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Raising Awareness About the Dangers of Sugar Over-Consumption

COMMUNITY HEALTHACTION of Staten Island
A Member of BRIGHTPOINT HEALTH

By Diane Arneth
Executive Director
Community Health Action of Staten Island

In 2015, childhood obesity for children K-8 in New York City showed a decline of 5.5%. That's the good news. The bad news is that over the last 40 years, childhood obesity rates have tripled, with close to 1 out of 3 of New York State's children overweight or obese. The grown ups fare far worse—6 out of 10 adults living in New York State are also overweight or obese.

Obesity-related medical costs in New York State are expected to reach $19.8 billion by 2018. In human terms, these costs represent individual lives harmed and eventually cut short by diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer. For children, 6 out of 10 obese children develop serious medical complications due to their weight.

What we choose to eat and drink as adults in America is largely a personal choice. We believe that as responsible parents we make those same choices for our children. But making good choices involves having accurate and complete information—something we have not always had about the food that is created, marketed and sold to us. Despite industry claims to the contrary, there is mounting evidence that the added sugar we consume in our food and beverages is far from harmless.

We need to raise the bar in terms of recognizing and addressing the critical role that sugar-sweetened food and beverages play in the obesity epidemic. It has become increasingly clear from the medical literature that one of the most significant contributors to the "fattening of America" is the added sugar in our diet. Look around you—breakfast cereals, which used to provide needed protein, healthy carbohydrates, B vitamins and fiber, now are overwhelmingly sugar-filled concoctions. Most bread contains two or three different kinds of refined or processed sugar—nothing that was ever in grandmother's bread. And, when I was growing up, soda was a once-in-a-while treat—for birthday parties or the 4th of July family barbeque, not the breakfast, lunch and dinner drink that it has become. In less than 90 years, the average annual sugar consumption in America has gone from 7.2 pounds/year to 130 pounds/year. In fact, American adults consume an average of 22 teaspoons daily and children, 32 teaspoons – when the recommended American Heart Association limit is no more than 9.5 teaspoons/day. Much of this added NOT BY US but by manufacturers who know that humans are hard wired to seek out the sweet.

It is time that we label highly sugared foods and drinks for what they are—hazards to our health when consumed regularly and as part of our everyday diet. It is time to do whatever we can to control and reduce children's access to sugar-sweetened beverages, which provide more than 33% of the excess sugar calories we consume.

New York State has always been responsive to safeguard the health of its citizens when it becomes clear that a serious hazard exists. There is enough evidence to suggest that the time has come for us to assign added and processed sugars to that category.

Assemblyman Titone Introduces Package of Legislation to Combat Sugar Overconsumption

I am proud to introduce a package of bills that would address the overconsumption of sugar products. The first bill would require a warning label on food and beverage products with a high content of added sugar, the second would mandate the New York State Department of Health to determine the phrasing of the label, and the third would ban the sale of sugary beverages larger than 16 ounces (473 ml) to minors. Scientific research has conclusively linked increased sugar consumption to health ailments, especially obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay, and in New York the population under the categories of "obese" and "overweight" reached epidemic proportions over the past decade. My legislation seeks to address this issue by increasing public awareness regarding these health risks, allowing consumers to be better informed when making dietary choices for themselves and their families.

It is more urgent than ever we emphasize the dangers of excessive sugar consumption. We must act to protect consumers by providing them with accurate information explaining the risk so that adults and children alike can make truly informed choices.

In 2012, nearly a quarter of adult New Yorkers were obese, and just over three-fifths were overweight or obese. Obesity is of particular concern because it opens the door to long-term,

See "Combat Sugar Consumption" on page 3

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New Businesses in the District

Exceptional Creations
130 Victory Boulevard
(718) 720-9233

Not sure what to buy that difficult to shop for person on Valentine's Day? Problem Solved!! Head over to Staten Island's newest gift shop located at 130 Victory Blvd. for handmade wreathes, jewelry, chocolate, plants, and so much more!!!

Bay Sweet Café
382 Bay Street
(718) 981-4420

A new café on Bay Street offering a host of menu options, from Ezekiel bread sandwiches to an Italian hot dog that is presented on Italian bread.

Harbor Eats
1000 Richmond Terrace
Infoharboreats@gmail.com.

The new restaurant at Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden incorporates fresh vegetables from Snug Harbor's Heritage Farm and features dishes such as Blackened mahi mahi-filled tacos and pulled pork sandwiches.

3 Guys Sushi
530 Forest Avenue
(718) 447-0088

3 Guys Sushi serves fresh fish flown direct from Japan for weekend lunch and dinner service. Open daily for lunch and dinner (Sunday, dinner only).

Gotham Motorcycles
364 Bay Street
(718) 447-0020

New York City's only Indian Motorcycle dealer opened in a 10,000-square-foot showroom at 364 Bay St. in a new 40,000-square-foot commercial complex called Downtown Plaza.

Crunch Gym
364 Bay Street
(718) 816-7800

Crunch is a gym that believes in making serious exercise fun by fusing fitness and entertainment and holding true to a philosophy of No Judgments.

Casa Chonita
490 Broadway
(718) 447-1960

Homemade, traditional Mexican cuisine available for delivery or take out. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. There is free delivery within two miles; any travel on Staten Island over that amount costs $2 per mile.

Assemblyman Titone introduces Legislation to Make Children on School Buses Safer

I have introduced legislation that would require all school buses to be equipped with GPS tracking technology, so that parents can monitor the location of their child's bus to ensure their safety. In addition, I have also introduced legislation requiring comprehensive training for school bus drivers and attendants for safe and appropriate transportation of children with disabilities. This is in response to the incident that took place on September 18th, when Erika Rotbart, mother of a five year old non-verbal, autistic child named Aiden, was waiting for her son at the bus stop. When the bus did not arrive as scheduled, she called the school, police, Department of Education, and the bus company, none of whom could locate her son or provide an explanation as to the delay. After more than four hours of severe alarm and terror Aiden was finally reunited with his mother, but was suffering from dehydration, had wet his pants, and was emotionally and mentally distressed. He is now traumatized from his experience and unable to ride the bus, while other parents and caregivers understandably have lost all confidence in the bus company employed by the school. This unacceptable situation could have been avoided if the school bus Aiden was riding in was equipped with a GPS tracking device.

While many school districts in this country have equipped their buses with technology to allow parents to track their child's location with an app available on any smartphone or tablet, it is not required to be included, maintained, or even turned on. Given that it is not the first time something like this has happened to a child on a school bus, it is essential measures be taken to ensure history is not repeated. This bill will ensure the children of New York State have a safer ride to and from school and provide parents with peace of mind about their child's whereabouts.

Standing in support with "Occupy the Block", a movement aimed at raising awareness about the impact of violence on the community. This amazing group spent three nights a week for four hours each in an effort to make their community safer.

Assemblyman Titone handing out books at his table at Stapleton Library with Senator Savino, during the children's book and pajama giveaway!

Assemblyman Titone Advocates for Port Richmond Residents

(Right) Assemblyman Titone speaking against the proposed housing project in Port Richmond at a Community Board 1 meeting. The board ultimately voted against the proposed supportive housing project, citing zoning issues as well as an oversaturation of mental health services in the area.

(Below) Assemblyman Titone and Staten Island electeds meeting with New York State's Office of Mental Health to receive a briefing on the proposed project in Port Richmond.

Had a wonderful time giving a tour of Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden to NYS Regents Cea and Tilles, as well as NYS Museum Director Mark Schaming and Assemblyman Cusick.

Proud to stand in support with CWA as they continue their fight for a fair contract.

Combat Sugar Overconsumption *(from page 1)*

potentially lethal medical issues including diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer. The high obesity prevalence among children, and the severe adverse health and economic consequences to future generations, demands further actions to combat this problem. A 2010 report by the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity indicates that "one third of all children born in 2000 are expected to develop diabetes during their lifetime," and "the current generation may even be on track to have a shorter lifespan than their parents."

Obesity is a growing concern in New York State and a crisis for children in particular; it is critical we address obesity immediately to improve the health of New York's children and families, and reduce unnecessary additional health care expenditures related to obesity in children and adults. This legislation will accomplish that by allowing consumers to be better informed about their diets.

Historically, health warnings have increased knowledge of health risks and reduced consumption of products such as tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy food. Perhaps the largest case of mandated information provision in United States history was the 1990 Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA). Research has shown it resulted in an average reduction in calorie intake of 50-90 calories among label users. National Health Interview Survey data found, among non-Hispanic white women, that the implementation of the new labels was associated with a decrease in body weight and the probability of obesity. Data provided by Starbucks allowed researchers from Stanford to discover that calorie posting in New York City in 2008 led to a 6% reduction in calories per transaction. Evidence suggests that signs and labels at point of purchase impact buying behavior.

I am also concerned about sugar's highly addictive nature, something which many people are still not aware of. Consumption of sugar over a period of time alters the brains neurochemistry and people experience sugar withdrawals. In addition, the dopamine receptors start to downregulate, meaning that in the future more food/sugar is needed in order to get the same level of physiological satisfaction. Sugar and junk foods, due to their powerful effect on the reward centers of the brain, function similarly to drugs of abuse like cocaine, opiates, and nicotine.

The goal of this legislative package is to limit overconsumption of sugary food and beverage products through the use of warning labels to better inform the public. Additionally, banning the sale of large, sugar-laden beverages to children will combat the childhood obesity epidemic by giving parents more control over their diets. Our children will not always make the best dietary decisions, a perilous thought given they are the most affected by, and vulnerable to, sugar's dangerous allure. We must make it our responsibility to make them as safe and healthy as possible.

Bike & Ride Pilot Program on S53 and S93 Bus Routes

Starting on September 6th, the MTA is testing a new way for you to see more of New York by bike. On the S53 and S93 routes, we have installed bicycle racks to the front of the buses which can be used on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no extra charge to use the rack; just follow these steps and you'll be on your way to cycling fun and great exercise!

There is no age restriction for using the bicycle racks, but the rider must be able to load/unload their bicycle competently, securely, safely, and without assistance from the bus operator. Any child/youth or adult that is unable to safely operate the bicycle racks may be restricted from using the bicycle rack.

Only non-collapsible, conventional bicycles that are no longer than 80 inches, no higher than 48 inches, and no wider than 22 inches are permitted. Mopeds, tricycles, motor-powered bicycles and motorcycles are prohibited.

Visit www.mta.info for more detailed information on how to use these racks.

EZ Pass continues to offer significantly reduced rates (57% less than cash toll) for Staten Island residents. Go to **https://www.e-zpassny.com** and start saving today!

Greetings from Assemblyman Matthew J. Titone:

I am excited to announce many legislative accomplishments from our most recent session. Among them are ethics reforms, protections for victims of human trafficking, as well as significantly increased funding in the budget for state aid to schools.

In addition to introducing 118 pieces of legislation, locally I helped secure capital funding for organizations including the Staten Island Children's Museum and the National Lighthouse Museum, and priority project funds for organizations such as the Empowerment Zone, On Your Mark, Vietnam Veterans of America, Volunteers of America, A Very Special Place, Community Resources, Angel On A Leash, and the Pride Center of Staten Island.

There is a lot more work to be done statewide, as well as in our local community. I look forward to continuing to serve you to the utmost of my abilities!

Upcoming Events on Staten Island:

American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

Oct. 18 / 9:00 a.m. check-in;
11:00 a.m. walk begins
Midland Beach Parking Lot 7
(Father Capodanno Blvd. & Iona St.)
Excelsior Grand 2380 Hylan Blvd.

New York City Marathon

Nov. 1

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Assemblyman
Matthew Titone
Reports to the People

It was truly an honor and privilege to speak and express gratitude at the POW/MIA remembrance ceremony on September 20th.