

Sugar-coating a complex problem

By ACSH Staff — September 8, 2011

In one month, it will become increasingly difficult to find a sugar-sweetened beverage in any city-owned building in Boston. And in the meantime, to prime residents for this [phase-out](#) ^[1]ordered by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, a \$1 million federally funded campaign will urge them to reduce their consumption of these beverages. The city-wide media campaign is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and targets sugar-sweetened beverages in an effort to combat rising obesity rates and, subsequently, higher health care costs.

This campaign, aimed at scaring parents and teenagers about the dangers of sugary sodas, echoes a similar campaign orchestrated in New York two years ago by the Health Commissioner, Dr. Thomas Farley. That effort was roundly criticized for manipulating facts about the actual caloric content of sodas, and for being unnecessarily alarmist.

While ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan agrees that an excess of such beverages in anyone's diet amounts to too many calories, she points out that it's foolish to focus on just one element of people's diets, when it's evident that there are many factors contributing to obesity. She also notes that replacing sugar-sweetened beverages with fruit juice does nothing to lower the calorie count and, contrary to popular belief, provides little in the way of nutritional benefit. If people really must have their daily soda, she says, why not suggest they switch to sugar-free versions?

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2011/09/08/sugar-coating-a-complex-problem>

Links

[1] <http://www.boston.com/Boston/whitecoatnotes/2011/09/boston-launching-media-blitz-against-sugary-drinks/BeY77hRIK3himN7h92HsUM/index.html>