



**Kansas Public Health Association, Inc.**

*Affiliated with the American Public Health Association*

**215 S.E. 8th Avenue**

**Topeka, Kansas 66603-3906**

Phone: 785-233-3103 fax: 785-233-3439

E-mail: [director@kpha.us](mailto:director@kpha.us)

Web Site: <http://www.kpha.us>

**To: The Honorable Representative Jim Morrison,  
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee  
Re: Testimony in support of HB2137**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2137. I am Elaine Schwartz, Executive Director of the Kansas Public Health Association. KPHA is the professional home to 500 members committed to and working for a healthier Kansas. We are in support of HB 2137. Our reasons are primarily twofold. The first relates to obesity concerns in school age children and the second relates to oral health.

Due to the nature of childhood obesity being a significant health problem in our country today this requirement should help children learn to eat more healthy, and thus be more healthier through their childhood and into adulthood.

At a meeting one of our members was at last week there was a research study presentation given regarding childhood obesity. The researchers stated that if something is not done to correct this problem soon, children of today will be the first generation in MANY generations, to live shorter life spans than their parents.

This research study, in its second year, is being conducted in the Kansas City metro area in a School Age Program (before and after school care) by the University of Kansas and the YMCA with National Institutes for Health funding. They offer healthy alternative snacks to the children and increase their activity level, hoping to show a decreased Body Mass Indicator, (BMI), and less health risks to children who ate healthier and were more physically active. Weight loss was not a goal, but may be a significant outcome. 10 - 15 % of these adolescents had a decreased BMI <95%. 60 % had one or more CVD (coronary vascular disease) risk factor, 20% had two or more risk factors and these overweight adolescents were 20% more likely to become obese adults.

As for Oral Health, research (below) clearly demonstrates frequent ingestion of food and beverages that contain sugar are a major risk factor for the frequency and severity of dental caries (tooth decay).

Oral bacteria utilize sugars to create an acidic environment in the mouth and, over time, this repeated acid formation leads to dental caries. If there is an increase in sugar consumption, then the risk of dental caries also increases.

With both obesity and oral health risks, the cost of health care increases. Passing HB2137 favorably would help reduce those costs. More importantly, it is of great public health interest for our children and future generations, to help reinforce healthier lifestyles and choices for longer and stronger lives.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2137.

*1. Joint Report of the American Dental Association Council on Access, Prevention and Interprofessional Relations and Council on Scientific Affairs to the House of Delegates: Response to Resolution 73H-2000.*

*2. Shenkin et al, Soft Drink Consumption and Caries Risk in Children and Adolescents, General Dentistry January/February 2003).*

