



Bay Area Youth Confront Soda Industry in Fight Against Diabetes

Videos, Ad Campaign Demand Truth About Sugary Drinks, End to Targeting Young People

FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Contact:

Jeff Gillenkirk

mediacontact@opentruthnow.org

San Francisco, CA...The Open Truth campaign, a youth-focused effort to highlight the health impacts of sugary drinks and expose precision marketing practices that target young people and communities of color, launches today in San Francisco. The multi-media campaign includes videos created by Bay Area youth from The Bigger Picture Campaign, billboards in the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhood, and ads on bus shelters and MUNI buses, BART stations and trains, AC Transit and storefronts around the Bay Area. The youth videos and other features of the Open Truth campaign are at www.opentruthnow.org.

The public health campaign features a concerted effort by Bay Area youth to address the type 2 diabetes epidemic afflicting them and their communities. Almost one-quarter of teens today have pre-diabetes – double the rate of just 10 years ago. One in three youth born in the U.S. after the year 2000 will get type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes (1 in 2 African American and Latino youth) along with some or all of its major health consequences including stroke, kidney failure, amputations and blindness.

A major cause of this epidemic is the consumption of sugary drinks. Just one 12-ounce soda has about 10 teaspoons of sugar — more than the recommended daily maximum for adults and more than 3 times the recommended maximum for kids. Studies show that drinking just one sugary drink a day can lead to significant increased risk of diabetes, tooth decay and other health problems.

Studies show that sugary drink companies spend more than \$28 million a year on marketing campaigns specifically targeting youth of color. Tens of millions more dollars are paid to celebrities such as LeBron James, Beyoncé and Katy Perry through endorsement deals to push soda consumption. Through the Open Truth campaign, Bay Area youth are talking back to the sugary drinks industry, demanding the truth about the negative health effects of sugary drinks and an end to marketing tactics that target them.

“Sugary drinks are already the number one source of added calories in teens’ diets, yet the beverage industry is targeting youth of color as their future growth market,” says Sarah Fine, Project Director of the Health Communications Program at the UCSF Center

for Vulnerable Populations and a coordinator of the Open Truth campaign. “The youth targeted by sugary drink companies are the first generation expected to live shorter lives than their parents due to preventable chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, unless we do something about it.”

The Open Truth campaign is calling upon people to help in the following ways:

1. Email or tweet sugary drink executives and demand they stop marketing unhealthy beverages to children and teens.
2. Ask that labels on soda cans and bottles convey clearly how much sugar the drink contains.
3. Learn about proposed sugary drink warning label legislation in California.

To find out how the sugary drink industry targets youth and how you can take action, go to www.opentruthnow.org, and follow @opentruthnow on twitter and Open Truth Now on Facebook.

The Open Truth Campaign is a collaboration between Shape Up San Francisco Coalition (project of the Population Health Division of the San Francisco Department of Public Health), the Alameda County Department of Public Health, Sonoma County Department of Health Services, The Bigger Picture (Youth Speaks and Center for Vulnerable Populations/ UCSF), the American Heart Association Greater Bay Area Division, and the Community Engagement and Health Policy Program of UCSF’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI).