

Healthy Food Checkout Lane

Overview of Healthy Food Checkout Lane

- The idea of a healthy food checkout lane comes from a publication from ChangeLab Solutions.² It was then implemented with help from a coalition of organizations in the LA community—with help from ChangeLab Solutions—in some locations of a grocery store chain in Los Angeles called Northgate Market.
- They converted, in one of their stores, a regular checkout lane into a “healthy checkout lane.”³
- The article quotes Teresa Blanco, wellness manager (or at least wellness manager in 2017 when this article was published) for Northgate Market, as saying that “In its first month, the healthy aisle was doing 3 times more sales a week than the regular aisles.”³
- As of the article’s publication, 10 more Northgate Market locations have installed “healthy checkout and pilot” lanes in LA and Orange County.²

Why This Policy Matters

- The 2020 Illinois Youth Survey that focused on Rural Counties reported that 23% of 8th graders, 33% of 10th graders, and 36% of 12th graders were overweight or obese.¹ The issues that lead to these worrying levels of childhood obesity are complex, and a variety of steps can be taken to address them. One of these steps is the regulation of food marketing.
- According to ChangeLab Solutions, there is research demonstrating that food advertising has an impact on the “eating behaviors, preferences, and purchase requests of young children.”²
- Most of the food marketing to young children promotes beverages and foods that are unhealthy, and research demonstrates that after seeing food advertisements, kids ask for and consume more unhealthy food.²
- Grocery stores are one of the locations through which children are exposed to food marketing², and “46% of impulse purchases occur in checkout aisles.”³
- Recognizing this, the healthy food checkout aisle aims to create an environment within grocery stores where the options that tempt customers on their way out of the store are healthy rather than unhealthy.

Considerations for Healthy Food Aisles

- It is important to work with your local community to get this done (meaning grocery store owners, people who work in the grocery store, parents in the community, community organizations etc).

- The healthy food checkout lane is a voluntary policy action, at least it is in the way that it is conceived by ChangeLab Solutions and in this policy document. This means that grocery store owners must choose to incorporate it into their stores.
- Because the policy is voluntary, it does not have to contend with the more complex legal questions that accompany some kinds of marketing regulations, but it may be that because of this, collaboration with business owners is of even greater importance than usual, as grocery stores must be convinced to choose the policy.

Works Cited

1. Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2020). Illinois Youth Survey 2020 Frequency Report: Rural. Champaign, IL: CPRD, School of Social Work, University of Illinois. https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_178052/File/state-reports/2020/IYS%202020%20Rural%20Report%20Final_rev.pdf
2. ChangeLab Solutions. (2015). Marketing Matters Executive Summary White Paper on Strategies to Reduce Unhealthy Food and Beverage Marketing to Young Children
3. ChangeLab Solutions. (2017, April 28). *Parents Push for Healthy Food at Supermarket*. <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/story/parents-push-healthy-food-supermarket>