Title: HEALTHY VENDING IN STATE GOVERNMENT: IS IT MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Author(s): A. Clay[1], A. Nickerson[1], P. Callas[2], S. Coburn[3]
1. Nutrition and Food Sciences, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
2. Mathematics and Statistics Department, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
3. Vermont Department of Health, Burlington, VT

Learning Outcome: To examine the effect of point of purchase designation of healthy vending items on vending sales and employee purchasing behavior, attitudes, and intentions.

Text: The increasing prevalence of obesity in the United States is a major public health concern. Also, the demanding work day of the average American can limit access to food within the workplace, often leaving foods sold in vending machines as the only available option. This study examined the effect of point-of-purchase designation of healthy vending items on vending sales and employee purchasing behaviors, attitudes, and intentions in state government. A point-of-purchase vending program utilizing nutrition guidelines and "traffic light" signage categorizing the healthfulness of vending foods was implemented at the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) in Burlington. Guidelines identified targets for calories, fat, sodium, and sugar. Sales data were collected pre-introduction of the guidelines and again post-introduction. VDH employees were asked to complete a pre- and post-intervention survey regarding current and intended behaviors and attitudes toward healthy vending. Survey questions were based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (constructs: behavioral intentions, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control). Data are still being collected; results will be shared at time of presentation. To date, much of the literature about healthy vending has focused on examining the effects of increased availability of healthy items, prices alterations and motivational signage. No studies have examined the effectiveness of point-of-purchase designation of healthy items in vending machines.