



## **Module 11: Food**

### **Part 5: Ongoing Efforts**

So, the fifth issue that I'd like to talk about today is the kinds of efforts that we see happening across the country, and sort of where we're seeing the next steps in the movement of providing access to affordable food for all people.

So, what's next? We're seeing a number of ongoing efforts to pursue places to buy affordable and healthy food. We already talked a little bit about all the other states and cities, who are thinking carefully about creating incentive programs. We see progress from the American Heart Association's leadership, and leadership from the Robert Wood Johnson's foundation to support cities and states in thinking strategically about how they can make these kinds of programs come to fruition.

We're also, frankly, seeing an emergence of conversation around in-store marketing approaches. So, we have talked a little bit about signage in corner stores, for example, but the conversation is certainly broad, and at this point to include a number of different strategies. And what we talk about are the four P's of marketing, so what is the product, how is that product placed, what is the price of the product, and promotion, how is it promoted. So, more and more conversation, and one example is here on the slide about guiding stars which is a proprietary algorithm that grades all the products in a supermarket, and assigns it a star, one star, two stars, or three stars, to help the consumer identify the healthier items within each category of the supermarket. And these kinds of strategies are becoming an increased interest to both government and private retailers as a way to help guide consumers to healthier items.

We're also seeing new community benefits requirements under the new Affordable Care Act. We're seeing that health care reform is really broadening the conversation about what community health means, and as part of that conversation we're seeing more and more pilot programs of healthy food bucks, strategies that may now link doctors with healthy prescriptions for food that take similar look to what we saw with the farmer's market buck programs, where giving people two dollar voucher for healthy food item, but that voucher is distributed by their general practitioner, or perhaps even through Maternal Child Health program provider.

This is one cartoon that Brian Wonasink, who has done a good bit of work on this in-store marketing, and also just marketing in general, in cafeterias primarily, has put together. And I like it because you can realize the difference that a sign can make. So in one case they called the cake the chocolate cake, and in the other case they called it the Belgian Black Forest Double Chocolate Cake. And there's a lot of interest right now in understanding how these kinds of very subtle changes may make a difference in people's decision making.

The way that this, right now, is talked about is through a strategy called behavioral economics. And behavioral economics key concepts include the ones that are provided here, and help us understand how consumers make decisions. So we think about cognitive overload. So, is there so much information that it becomes too overwhelming, and then people aren't able to make a decision. We're doing some work now on front of pack labeling, and I have seen



## Public Health Learning Modules

Using **Healthy People 2020**  
to Improve Population Health



ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION TEACHING AND RESEARCH

packages that include more logos than any human being could come to understand. So, these kinds of issues, where we're interested in creating prompts, we also have to think about are we creating a cognitive overload?

Cues are also part of the conversation. Clearly, part of the public health conversation for a long time. And in this case we're talking about how we can display products to either illicit temptation, or potentially minimize temptation. So, I use the breadbasket example often where if a breadbasket is there, given to you at your table while you're out to eat, you may suddenly be tempted to eat bread, whereas five minutes earlier you hadn't even thought of a piece of bread.

Present bias, thinking about the present at the expense of future and the consequences, so perhaps underestimating or ignoring the future health effects of your current unhealthy eating habits. You're just going to have one bite now, it's just one piece of cake, you'll start your diet tomorrow, that kind of thinking. Saliency is also really important, where the information at the decision point may be critical. So posting itemized nutritional information at the cafeteria for example, making sure that the way information is presented feels relevant to people, and again is at their decision point.

And self control is also something that's talked about in behavioral economics where people think about their will power to make decisions, and what may affect that will power in a positive, or in a negative way. So for example if you need to have self control to resist in-store temptations, you may want to minimize a self control issue by taking away an in-store temptation.

The food trust has launched with its partner, the investment fund at Policy Link, a new web portal that's all about healthy food access. So if you're interested in learning more about some of the in's and out's of farmers markets, or corner store programs, or nationally what's going on with supermarket programs, and you want to perhaps find money for these resources, or learn what's the latest that's happening on the Hill, you can come to the Healthy Food Access Portal, and we have on-going updated information about all of the strategies we've talked about today. And here's a list of how you can find us on the web at the [foodtrust.org](http://foodtrust.org), and we certainly encourage anytime that you want to reach out to us to go ahead and do that. Thank you.