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**DEPUTY MAYOR GIBBS, COMMISSIONER FARLEY AND COMMISSIONER DOAR  
LAUNCH TWO NEW INITIATIVES TO COMBAT OBESITY EPIDEMIC BY HELPING  
NEW YORKERS SHOP AND EAT HEALTHY**

*Shop Healthy NYC Pilot Seeks to Promote Fruits and Vegetable, Minimize Junk Food*

*“Cut the Junk” Campaign Helps Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice*

Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs, Health Commissioner Thomas A. Farley and Human Resources Administration Commissioner Robert Doar today announced two new healthy eating initiatives. Shop Healthy NYC, the Health Department’s new voluntary pilot program, asks bodegas to commit to prioritizing the stocking and display of healthy food and produce while aiming to minimize the availability of junk food. With more than 100 community groups and 150 food retail venues in two high-need Bronx neighborhoods – Fordham and West Farms – agreeing to the pilot, the program has the potential to impact 136,000 people. Two leading suppliers and distributors for city food stores – Jetro and Krasdale – will work with store owners to offer discounts on Shop Healthy foods and provide an easy to use order form for healthier items. The Human Resources Administration has created “Cut the Junk,” the city’s first ever illustrated healthy eating and cost comparison booklet to show that cooking food at home can be healthier and less expensive than eating take out or fast food. The launch of the booklet will be followed by an educational subway campaign in late summer. The Deputy Mayor made the announcement at C-Town in the Bronx, where she was joined by Senator Gustavo Rivera, CEO of Jetro/RD Stanley Fleishman, President of New Era Foods One Inc. Jose Perez and Food Policy Coordinator Kim Kessler.

“Considering that obesity and its health impacts, such as heart disease and diabetes, disproportionately affect low-income communities, it is critical that we make progress in increasing access to healthy food – and decreasing access to junk food – in these neighborhoods,” said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. “Lasting change can be slow, but daily decisions as simple as buying an apple instead of a sugary beverage can have positive long-term health impacts.”

“Healthy communities need a healthy food environment. In the Bronx, nearly 70 percent of residents are obese or overweight and at higher risk for certain cancers, diabetes and heart disease,” said New York City Health Commissioner Thomas Farley. “Shop Healthy Bronx is an opportunity to spark lasting change to our food system, with nearly one hundred local stores already committing to participate.”

“Chronic illnesses associated with obesity, such as diabetes, can be devastating for families and costly for the City,” said HRA Commissioner Doar. “Our campaign sends a strong message that

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we need to ‘Cut the Junk’ from our diets, and that good nutrition can both save lives and taxpayer dollars. This common-sense guidance promoting less expensive alternatives to unhealthy foods can help stretch a family’s food budget further. We are very proud to join Deputy Mayor Gibbs and our partners at the Department of Health to promote good nutrition habits among all New Yorkers.”

“I commend the Mayor for coming to the Belmont section of the Bronx to celebrate Bronx small business owners who have taken on the challenge of helping to make their community healthier as participants in the Department of Health’s Shop Healthy Initiative,” said Senator Gustavo Rivera. “I am excited that the Bronx CAN Health Initiative that I started with Borough President Diaz Jr. and health partners like Montefiore Medical Center and DOH will now expand to include grocery stores, bodegas, supermarkets and corner stores.”

“Getting more healthy food options into the hands of Bronx consumers has been a major goal of my office’s Bronx CAN initiative since its inception, and the Shop Healthy NYC pilot program will help to make that happen,” said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. “CAN stands for ‘changing attitudes now,’ and by offering borough residents healthier food in their neighborhood stores we can give people an easy, affordable opportunity to take a first step towards better health.”

“Montefiore has been collaborating with the Department of Health for 18 months and we are thrilled to see this program, which reinforces our efforts to support the healthy eating habits of our community,” said Nicole Hollingsworth, Ed.D., Senior Director for Community and Population health at Montefiore Medical Center. “The developments announced today are part of a comprehensive program that can facilitate healthy choices and enrich the lives for our patients and all members of the community.”

“As an integral member of the food distribution channel and a supporter of ‘Shop Healthy Bronx ’from the inception, Jetro/RD would like to reinforce our commitment to our customers in the Bronx,” said Stanley Fleishman, CEO of of Jetro/RD. “Jetro/RD has worked with organizations in the Bronx for several years to promote this healthy initiative. We are committed to yearly health fairs at our location to promote these healthy products and healthy lifestyle education. We feel that a partnership with the NYC Health Dept. and both the Bronx Borough Presidents office and Senator Gustavo’s office will help keep the focus on the subject, and pay rewards to the community.”

“Nutritious and healthy foods should not be a luxury,” said Mitch Klein, V.P. Government Relations, Krasdale Foods. “Krasdale Foods, C-town, Bravo and A.I.M. supermarkets are committed to providing these products at competitive prices in all of the communities we serve.”

“New Era Foods One, Inc, DBA C-Town Supermarkets, located in Little Italy Bronx, NY, feels strongly about the Shop Healthy Bronx Initiative,” said Jose Perez, President, New Era Foods One, Inc. “Operating for over 30 years within this community grants us the wisdom, of the benefits, found within healthy living and eating. Our business model has always placed an emphasis on fresh quality produce, and vegetables, for this reason. There is no coincidence as to why our store’s layout showcases these perishable products at the entrance. Neither is there a coincidence to how the colors and scents are statistically found to be most pleasing to our customers’ senses. Fresh food sells itself, and healthy alternatives taste great, we are simply proud to provide and properly display the options.”

New York City has a comprehensive approach to changing the food environment and is committed to increasing awareness among New Yorkers about good nutrition and healthy food options by improving the availability of healthy food and educating New Yorkers about the importance of a healthy diet.

Shop Healthy NYC is a multi-faceted, incremental approach that works to address supply and demand to ensure lasting changes to the City's food supply. The program, which is launching in the Bronx, starts with a food retail challenge in which storeowners commit to seven store changes including: Promoting healthy food and beverages with Shop Healthy marketing materials; offering fruits and vegetables at the front of the store or the cash register; displaying water and other low-calorie drinks at eye-level; offering and promoting a healthy sandwich and meal combo at the deli counter; stocking low-sodium and no-sugar added canned goods; stocking two snacks that meet NYC Healthy Snack Standards; and removing all advertising from the entry door.

Participating stores will receive marketing tools like shelf hangers and free-standing baskets to present fresh produce. To date more than 80 stores have agreed to participate in the retail challenge and almost 90 percent (150) of target stores in Fordham and West Farms have agreed to post materials highlighting healthier options. The Shop Healthy initiative is funded by the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, a unit of the Mayor's Office that designs and tests innovative anti-poverty programs

Two major wholesale suppliers, Jetro and Krasdale, have committed to this initiative by providing participating storeowners with incentives to stock healthy options. Jetro is committed to working with vendors on discounts for shop healthy identified foods for participating stores and Krasdale, which focuses on supermarkets, will create an order form listing all available items that meet the criteria to make it easy for stores to stock healthier items. This support has the capacity to impact the entire city as all Jetro warehouses in NYC will offer these incentives and Krasdale stores citywide will receive the order sheets.

Residents and community-based organizations will also play a pivotal role in ensuring that food retail change lasts. Local forums with schools, senior centers, health care sites and community members will address how customers can support stores in changing their inventory. For example, customers can give their local bodega a card listing the items they'd like to see stocked such as fresh fruit, 1% milk and whole wheat bread. Adopt-a-Shop workshops will also train residents to support their local stores in making the changes they want to see. Already, 12 workshops involving 106 residents have led to the adoption of 11 stores.

Stores that fulfill the seven components of the challenge will receive a Proclamation from the Bronx "Changing Attitudes Now" initiative, a collaboration of the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr and Senator Gustavo Rivera, and a certificate from the Bronx Chamber of Commerce.

Also promoting healthier eating, HRA's "Cut the Junk campaign" will emphasize that eating healthy foods can be less expensive than unhealthy foods, which is especially important for low-income families stretching their food budget dollars. The "Cut the Junk" booklet, which HRA created in partnership with Cornell University Cooperative Extension, details the cost effectiveness of a meal made at home. For example, a whole baked chicken can be made at home for nearly forty percent less than the price of the typical fried take-out version. The booklet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats. "Cut The Junk" also contains a list of healthy snacks,

educates readers on how to understand food labels and warns about foods that may have more sugar than readers think, such as iced tea and cereal. The booklet also includes suggestions on portion-control strategies, such as using smaller plates. Choosing healthier options could mean a difference of hundreds of additional calories every day, as well as savings in real dollars and food stamp benefits.

Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service recently published a report emphasizing that many healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables, cost less than foods high in saturated fat, added sugars, and/or sodium.

“Cut the Junk” will join the City’s ongoing comprehensive public education effort about the importance of healthy eating with a citywide subway campaign starting in August and running through September, as well as in bus shelters in communities throughout the five boroughs.

“We are gratified to learn that our Eat Smart New York classes transform the lives of thousands of families every year,” said Carol M. Parker-Duncanson, Program Leader at Cornell University Cooperative Extension's Nutrition and Health Program. “These families make long term decisions on how to use their food dollars and food stamp benefits wisely, by making nutritious choices. Making change to our diets can be challenging, but by working with the ‘City's Cut the Junk’ campaign we can give New Yorkers the tools they need to reduce their risk of obesity and chronic disease through improved nutrition and health practices.”

HRA operates several Food Stamp and nutrition education programs including the Food Stamp Nutrition Outreach Program and SNAP-Ed. The Food Stamp Nutrition Outreach Program educates New Yorkers who are eligible for the Food Stamp program by visiting communities throughout the five boroughs. The Food Stamp Nutrition Outreach Program provides training on the Food Stamp program and application process, pre-screens applicants who may qualify, helps them with the application process, and provides education on good nutrition. SNAP-Ed is a federally funded program that HRA administers in New York City. HRA runs two SNAP-Ed programs in partnership with local organizations: Eat Smart NYC, with the Cornell University Cooperative Extension (CUCE-NYC); and Cook Shop, with the Food Bank for NYC. SNAP-Ed programs encourage New Yorkers who receive food stamps to make healthy food choices.

The “Cut the Junk” guide will be available online and copies will be distributed at locations throughout the City Food Stamp Offices, food pantries and farmers' markets. To download the Cut the Junk Booklet please visit: [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).

### **About the Obesity Task Force**

In December 2011, Mayor Bloomberg charged Deputy Mayor Gibbs and Deputy Mayor of Operations Holloway with significantly strengthening the City’s anti-obesity efforts by convening a multi-agency task force that would recommend innovative, proactive solutions to address the obesity crisis in New York City. The Obesity Task Force was convened in January 2012 and conducted its work over the following several months.

Chaired by Deputy Mayors Gibbs and Holloway, Commissioners from eleven City agencies and representatives from the Mayor’s Office participated including: Alan Aviles, President, Health and Hospitals Corporation; Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation; David Bragdon, Director, Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability; Amanda Burden, Commissioner,

Department of City Planning; David Burney, FAIA, Commissioner, Department of Design and Construction; Robert Doar, Commissioner, Human Resources Administration; Dr. Thomas Farley, Commissioner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Kim Kessler, Food Policy Coordinator; Robert LiMandri, Commissioner, Department of Buildings; John Rhea, Chairman, NYC Housing Authority; Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner, Department of Transportation; Carter Strickland, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection; and Dennis Walcott, Chancellor, Department of Education.

### **About Overweight and Obesity**

Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more and overweight is a BMI of 25 or more. BMI is a metric that measures excess weight in relation to height. More information about how to calculate BMI for children is available on the CDC website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). Many serious health conditions are related to being overweight or obese, such as depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, respiratory problems and heart disease.

Obesity is a rapidly growing public health problem. With 58 percent of New York City adults – over 3,400,000 people – now overweight or obese, this has become the new norm in New York City. Obesity is a leading cause of preventable premature death, second only to tobacco, and is responsible for thousands of deaths per year through diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

More than one in three adult New Yorkers now either has diabetes or a condition known as pre-diabetes, a state where blood sugar is higher than normal indicating the person is at risk for developing diabetes in the future. Obesity statistics are even more startling among New York City’s youth. Despite recent progress with childhood obesity, 21.7 percent of New York City children ages 6-11 years were obese, compared with 18.0 percent nationally in 2009-2010.

The obesity epidemic strikes hardest in communities already suffering from health and economic disparities, particularly black, Latino and low-income neighborhoods; non-Hispanic black New Yorkers are almost three times more likely, and Hispanics twice as likely, as non-Hispanic whites to die from diabetes. Additionally, obesity-related illnesses cost New York City residents \$4 billion annually through higher Medicaid and Medicare costs.

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