

Obesity has become a key issue in both Canada and the United States, putting pressure on the food industry to make changes to the products they offer. With about six million Canadians suffering from obesity, it has become a focus of many organizations.

The Healthy Kids Panel, struck by the Government of Ontario, has put forward a number of recommendations to address obesity in children specifically aimed at food industry, including:

- Banning the marketing of high-calorie, low nutrient foods, beverages and snacks to children under 12 years of age.
- Banning point-of-sale promotions and displays of high calorie, low-nutrient foods and beverages in retail settings.
- Requiring all restaurants, including fast food outlets and retail grocery stores, to list the calories in each item on their menus and to make this information visible on menu boards.
- Encouraging food retailers to adopt transparent, easy-to-understand objective nutrition rating systems for the products in the stores.
- Developing a single standard guideline for food and beverages served or sold where children plan and learn.

British Columbia has launched an Informed Dining program that identifies calorie levels in retail food service establishments. It is mandatory for food service establishments that are inside government institutions and voluntary for all other food service restaurants. A similar proposal is being looked at in Ontario.

BAC continues to support the need to address obesity and participates in meetings and discussions addressing these issues.