



MOTION Coalition

Michigan Organizations To Impact Obesity & Nutrition

An initiative of Authority Health

Support of HB 4207

The MOTION Coalition (Michigan Organizations to Impact Obesity & Nutrition) and its sponsoring body, Authority Health, support funding for urban food initiatives, as proposed in House Bill 4207. The issue, as defined by Rep. Andy Schor, appropriately reflects the challenge of motivating food businesses in urban communities to offer healthy, fresh food alternatives to standard convenience store products that lack nutritious value and promote obesity through high fat and sugar content.

Food businesses, whether they're small grocery stores or gas station stores, are motivated to maximize their shelf space to sell products with proven demand, such as candy and snack food. Many of these owners are not motivated to take an informed risk to offer fresh fruit and vegetable options to these products. HB 4207 offers an incentive for them to do the right thing.

The MOTION Coalition, through a State of Michigan grant, offers the Mi Plato, Mi Vida program to food businesses in Southwest Detroit. This program provides equipment and other support to stores willing to offer healthy products along with their standard fare. This has been a successful program that Authority Health would like to expand to other urban stores, thereby making fresh food more accessible to people living with food insecurity.

House Bill 4207 addresses a philosophical issue important to population health: Health in all policies. In this case, using the Michigan Strategic Fund to provide revitalization funds for this purpose contributes to the goal of building a healthier community, or, literally, "revitalizing" the community.

It's also good business. Convenience stores are increasingly seen as a convenient destination for consumers to buy fruit and vegetables, according to a 2013 report by the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) and the United Fresh Produce Association. As the demand for snack food grows among consumers, so is the demand for fresh fruits and vegetables. Over 70 percent of NACS member stores sell fresh fruit and vegetables.

Members of the MOTION Coalition, and Authority Health, support efforts in the Michigan House of Representatives, to encourage this and other initiatives that promote greater access to healthy food in areas of fresh food scarcity.