

Media release

UNHEALTHY FOOD ADVERTISING SPEND FAR OUTSTRIPS ADVERTISING OF HEALTHY FOOD

3 July 2008

The Public Health Association conference was told today that during 2007 the fast food industry spent \$12.94 for every man, woman and child in New Zealand on television advertising.

That compared with \$1.44 per New Zealander on the television advertising of fruit and vegetables during 2007.

The director of the Obesity Action Coalition told the public health workers gathered at Waitangi that overseas studies show television advertising aimed at children has an effect on what children prefer, buy and eat.

New Zealand research has also established that the food advertised on television during the hours children are most watching is mainly fast and convenience food.

"The fast food industry says their advertising does not have undue influence over children – it seems odd then that they bother with a multimillion dollar investment," Ms Sturgiss said.

She told the conference that, using standard advertising rates, it is estimated that during 2007, \$55,192,849 was spent on television advertising of fast food alone. In addition, \$20,162,384 was spent with television companies advertising chocolate in all its forms and \$17,755,433 on fizzy drinks.

Ms Sturgiss said the Obesity Action Coalition welcomed the potential inclusion of regulation-making powers around the advertising and marketing of unhealthy food in the new Public Health Bill. She said it was the Government fulfilling an important duty to its people.

"Public health law gives governments the power to protect their citizens' health by identifying, preventing and reducing health and safety risks. Public health law is necessary because people (and corporations) do not always prioritise the interests and welfare of other citizens."

For more information contact conference media advisor Liz Price on 0276 957 744.