

April 23, 2008

Lee Peeler
Elaine Kolish
Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative
Council for Better Business Bureaus
4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite #800
Arlington, VA 22203-1838

Dear Mr. Peeler and Ms. Kolish:

We have learned that the Council for Better Business Bureau's (CBBB) Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative may have some unintended consequences on PBS' underwriting policies. The American Academy of Pediatrics, National PTA, Children Now and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry would like to clarify our position on corporate underwriting of children's programming on PBS, specifically by CBBB pledge participants.

The PBS Guidelines for On-Air Underwriting Credits provide that underwriters of programs must be identified with an on-air credit but the non-commercial character of public television must be preserved. Consequently, the underwriting credit for a food or beverage company sponsor may not include depiction or mention of food or beverage products. As you know, there are some questions about whether or not PBS would need to alter its underwriting messages in order for companies participating in the new Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative to comply with commitments they have made to meet the Initiative's requirements. Specifically, participating companies must devote at least 50 percent of their advertising directed to children under 12 to promote "better-for-you" food products and/or messages that encourage good nutrition or healthy lifestyles. We would not want the Initiative's guidelines to be interpreted in a way that would require the identification and depiction of any products in the actual PBS underwriting message.

We strongly believe that PBS' underwriting messages should be treated as outside the scope of the food/beverage advertising commitments made by your pledge participants. As you know, our organizations are deeply concerned about children's unique vulnerability to commercial persuasion. PBS already has more stringent requirements in place to protect children from excessive commercialism. Thus, we appreciate and support PBS' organizational policies which prohibit program sponsors from depicting their products in underwriting messages.

While we think the commitment of the companies that have pledged to be part of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative is a good first step toward addressing the marketing of foods and beverages to children, we support the underwriting policies of PBS because we think it is important that children have access to quality, noncommercial programming. Consequently, we request that you interpret your guidelines to treat underwriting of PBS programming in accordance with existing PBS Guidelines for On-Air Credits as outside the scope of the CBBB's Initiative.

If you have any questions about our organizations' position or would like to discuss this matter further, please call Todd Haiken, Acting Manager of Public Policy for the National PTA at 202-289-6790 or Patti Miller, Vice President of Children Now at 510-763-2444 x105.

Sincerely,



Jan Harp Domene
PTA National President



Ted Lempert
President, Children Now



Dr. Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP
President, American Academy of Pediatrics



Michael Brody, MD
Chair of the Television and Media Committee
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

cc: Cathy Hogan, PBS