



# Project on Nutrition and Wellness

*Convergence Center for Policy Resolution*

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Growing Consumer Demand for Healthier Eating**

**Cross-Sector Collaboration Leads to Innovative Efforts on the Obesity Challenge**

Washington DC | July 18, 2017 — The [Project on Nutrition and Wellness](#) announces the release of its [final report](#), which highlights a broad scale effort to address the problem of obesity, diabetes, and other nutrition-related diseases in the United States. Despite the deep mistrust that often exists between the food industry and the public health community, PNW stakeholders worked together to create retail based programs that would encourage consumers to make healthier food choices.

PNW stakeholders represent a diverse group of people and organizations including food manufacturers and retailers, public health experts, health care providers, consumer advocates, health insurers, and others. They recognized that despite other sharp differences, they shared a common purpose - they could put market forces to work to increase the demand for healthier foods.

Key highlights from PNW's final report include:

- **PNW identified the retail space as an underdeveloped opportunity to increase demand for healthier foods.** *Attempts to reduce the sale of less healthy foods by the public health community puts food manufacturers and store owners at odds with this effort, and takes choices away from the consumer. However, the group realized that opportunities existed to influence consumer behavior, which would increase demand for healthier foods and encourage healthier eating. All sectors would benefit from this approach.*
- **PNW conducted groundbreaking consumer research.** *PNW commissioned consumer segmentation research from the National Marketing Institute, which identified a specific segment of the U.S. population - approximately 1 in 5 adults - that were looking for ways to improve their diets and would be receptive to new messaging and programming.*
- **PNW developed, tested, and implemented a variety of strategies to promote the sale of healthier foods and beverages in grocery and convenience stores nationwide.** *PNW created the Grocery Retail Scorecard, which provides retailers with over 90 low- and no- cost strategies to grow the sale of healthier foods. In addition, PNW worked extensively over two years with the National Association of Convenience Stores*

*to help them promote and sell better-for-you foods in their stores, including several in-store pilots to test and refine new marketing strategies.*

PNW also identified the following recommendations for future cross-sector collaboration:

- **Develop a national campaign around healthy eating and living.** *Food manufacturers, food retailers, health insurers and public health and community groups could work together to develop a broad marketing campaign or master narrative to encourage healthier eating. The campaign would be implemented through a coordinated series of marketplace and communications programs that reach consumers in multiple ways such as when food shopping, visiting the doctor or listening to public service announcements.*
- **Support efforts to integrate food retail, nutrition, and health care services.** *The growing awareness of the connection between food choices and good health provides an opportunity for greater integration that would offer consumers a one-stop-shop for food, nutrition, and health care services. Some retailers, for instance, have begun offering nutrition counseling services and/or have created health clinics with their stores. Financial incentives such as coupons or dining points for the purchase of healthier foods could be built in.*
- **Improve the supply chain for fresh foods.** *Small retailers often have limited access to fresh produce and other healthier items. These retailers could work with suppliers, distributors, and others to develop innovative solutions to improve the fresh foods distribution system.*
- **Assist small chains and independent stores.** *These stores have limited capacity to develop strategies to promote and market new products. They would benefit from partnerships with the public health community and academic institutions to develop easily adaptable, low cost marketing and communications strategies that promote healthier foods.*

PNW's collaborative model has shown that when it comes to shaping consumer demand, diverse sectors can be united around a common mission. PNW stakeholders and others demonstrated that cross-sector collaboration to grow consumer demand for healthier foods is not only possible, but also profitable. If purchasing healthier foods is more desirable, affordable, and available, more consumers will make the healthier choice.

The Project on Nutrition and Wellness was convened by [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#). Convergence is a Washington, DC-based non-profit organization that convenes people and groups with divergent views to build trust, identify solutions, and form alliances for action on critical national issues.

### **Reflections from PNW Participants**

*“The Project on Nutrition and Wellness confirmed that genuine collaboration and interaction across sectors is not only possible, but also productive.” ~ William Dietz, Professor, Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University*

“PNW stakeholders now understand each other’s perspectives far better and, as a result, are working differently in many settings, well beyond the original scope of the project.” ~ *Robert J. Fersh, President and Founder, Convergence Center for Policy Resolution*

“PNW brought together stakeholders with far-ranging perspectives on the obesity issue and created a ‘safe space’ for honest discourse. This enabled us to learn from each other and explore difficult issues without a defensive public posture. The relationships that were built through PNW continue to yield valuable learning and collaboration beyond the initial scope of the project.” ~ *Julie Greene, Director of Health & Nutrition, Ahold Delhaize*

“PNW developed a market-based framework for helping to solve the obesity issue, demonstrating that you can improve public health outcomes while also improving the food industry’s bottom line.” ~ *Kelly D. Johnson, Vice President, Government Affairs, Campbell Soup Company*

“PNW was invaluable in facilitating conversations with key leaders in the nutrition community and that has directly led to several deliverables with groups like the Hudson Institute and Cornell’s Food and Brand Lab. The new result of our partnership with PNW is that our industry is better able to provide healthier choices to consumers across the country.” ~ *Jeff Lenard, Vice President of Strategic Industry Initiatives, National Association of Convenience Stores*

“PNW provided a unique forum for industry and public health to come together. Bringing strange bedfellows together to build trust and understanding is a unique strength of Convergence.” ~ *Tracy Orleans, Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

"I have participated in a lot - and I mean a lot - of multi-stakeholder dialogues. None of these dialogues were as salient, as illuminating, or ultimately as productive as PNW." ~ *Mary Sophos, Executive Vice President, Grocery Manufacturers Association*