



Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Programme

Wednesday June 10th, 2026

For Immediate Release

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Says “Enough” to Unhealthy Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Bridgetown, Barbados – With nearly half of Barbadian youth facing a rising health crisis, the Childhood Obesity Prevention Programme of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB) launched a new public awareness campaign advocating for the protection of school environments from pervasive unhealthy food marketing. The national campaign entitled “Enough. If it harms our children’s health, it must be regulated” was launched on 10 June 2026.

The four-week campaign highlights a key gap in protection for children. While the 2023 Barbados School Nutrition Policy removed the physical availability of unhealthy products within schools, ultra-processed food and beverage companies continue to bypass these rules by targeting children with marketing in and around school environments.

The campaign comes at a critical time as childhood obesity is a growing concern in Barbados. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Observatory (2022), an estimated 42% of Barbadian children are classified as overweight or obese. Research shows that childhood obesity significantly elevates the risk of developing life-threatening non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in adulthood, including Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. Furthermore, the eating patterns established during childhood and adolescence often continue into adulthood.

Global data from UNICEF’s Child Nutrition Report indicates that obesity has overtaken underweight as the primary form of malnutrition among school-aged children globally. Without interventions to prevent childhood overweight and obesity, countries face both health and economic impacts, the UNICEF report explains.

One major culprit is the widespread exposure of children to ultra-processed food marketing. Children represent a key demographic for marketers as they affect their parents’ buying decisions and are future adult customers.

“Our children are growing up in an obesogenic environment surrounded by energy-dense, nutrient-poor ultra-processed foods that are cheap and heavily promoted,” said Greta Yearwood, CEO of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados. “Junk food marketing targets children because it works. Although restrictions on marketing are outlined within the School Nutrition Policy, corporate branding continues to surround our children in the spaces meant for their education and development. We hope that this campaign will raise awareness of the health harms of ultra-processed food marketing.”

Research shows that children are especially vulnerable to marketing. Many are too young to recognise



advertising, while older children are still developing the skills to question persuasive messages. Repeated exposure to marketing strategies – *such as branded school equipment, giveaways, and corporate sponsorships* – shape long-term taste preferences, purchase requests, and consumption before children even learn to read.

The Enough campaign builds on the Foundation's previous– *Protect Us, Give Us Warning Labels and Out Of Our Schools* – initiatives. Together, these campaigns called for stronger implementation and monitoring of the School Nutrition Policy, spotlighted the dangers of excess sodium, unhealthy fats and sugar, and called for the removal of unhealthy foods and beverages from schools with the backing of parents and guardians.

The newly launched campaign features a series of evidence-based video testimonials from professionals in medicine, law, and nutrition, alongside a testimonial video from youth advocates calling for healthier, more supportive environments.

The “Enough! If it harms our children’s health, it must be regulated” campaign was launched in collaborative partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR), and the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition.

From June 10 through July 7, 2026, the campaign is being broadcast across radio, television, and digital platforms. Members of the public are encouraged to support a healthier food environment by engaging with the campaign on Facebook and Instagram at @hsfbarbados using the hashtags: #StopUnhealthyMarketing, #Enough, #ProtectOurChildren, and #HealthySchools

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About the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. is a non-profit organization registered under the Companies Act 1982 of Barbados registration number 269 and under the Charities Act 1979-2 registration number 82. The Foundation was founded in 1985 as the Heart Foundation of Barbados and in 2006 embraced stroke to become the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados. Its Childhood Obesity Prevention (COP) Programme supports obesity prevention through mass media campaigns for increased awareness of the harms of sugary drinks and promotion of policy change.

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact the following persons:

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