

TSET Expands “Swap Up” Youth Nutrition Campaign

Teen obesity prevention initiative launches new messaging

OKLAHOMA CITY (May 10, 2021) – To help combat rising rates of childhood and adult obesity, the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) launched a teen-focused nutrition education campaign, Swap Up, earlier this year. Starting May 10, two new Swap Up educational messages will encourage teenagers to make healthier nutritional choices, along with free to order educational materials supporting the healthy behaviors youth can adopt.

The initial messaging for Swap Up focused on the benefits of drinking water and how water can improve physical performance. The new statewide messages will go a step further and illustrate how drinking water and eating fresh produce can give you more energy and help you think more clearly. The Swap Up campaign messages can be found at SwapUpOK.com and will run statewide on television, radio and social media.

“Empowering teens to make more nutritious choices is an important step to improving health outcomes in Oklahoma,” said TSET Executive Director Julie Bisbee. “Healthy habits learned at a younger age are more likely to stick for a lifetime and influence the health and wellbeing of this and future generations.”

To ensure teenagers across Oklahoma find the campaign relatable and realistic, these messages were made with both urban and rural communities in mind. One message features a teen grabbing a snack at a gas station, while the other shows a teen ordering at a fast food restaurant. Both educational messages feature teens who are about to make an unwise nutrition decision when their ‘future selves’ appear to confront them and help them see how their food and beverage choices will impact the way they think and feel in their near future.

“In research with Oklahoma teens, we learned that they currently perceive nutrition as being about later-in-life health. And, ‘healthy when I’m an adult’ is not a particularly motivating reason for teens to make dietary changes,” said Pamela Buchwald, senior director of Strategy & Communications Planning at Rescue Agency, producer of the ads. “As a result, we developed nutrition messaging to connect what teens eat today to how they feel and perform later that very same day, instead of 20 years into the future.”

In Oklahoma, 1 in 5 Oklahoma children ages 10-17 are categorized as overweight or obese, as well as nearly 70% of Oklahoma adults.

More than 400 Oklahoma teenagers participated in the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative research survey last year that asked questions about their eating habits, meal and snack sources, common barriers to healthy eating and their nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and beliefs.

Teens in rural areas were found to be significantly more likely than urban teens to report that they drank soda two or more times per day. Among all teens, the most common reasons for not eating fruit and vegetables in the past 7 days were that they didn't think about eating them and because their family did not buy them. A follow-up survey will be conducted in the upcoming months to begin tracking the impact of Swap Up over time.

Swap Up is part of the [TSET Healthy Youth Initiative](#) and delivers nutrition messages to teens 13-18 by providing tangible tips they can incorporate into their daily lives. Resources for educators and health care providers, including flyers and bookmark brochures, can be ordered at [TSEHealthyYouth.com/order](#).

To learn more about Swap Up, visit www.SwapUpOK.com.

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The **TSET Healthy Youth Initiative** is a statewide media effort focused on preventing and reducing tobacco use and obesity for Oklahomans ages 13-18. The initiative promotes healthy lifestyle choices for teens and gives parents resources to support their children in maintaining or developing healthy habits for a lifetime. Visit [TSEHealthyYouth.com](#) to learn more.

The **Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust** (TSET) serves as a partner and bridge builder for organizations shaping a healthier future for all Oklahomans. TSET provides leadership at the intersections of health by working with local coalitions and initiatives across the state, cultivating innovative and life-changing research, and working across public and private sectors to develop, support, implement and evaluate creative strategies to take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve the public's health. To learn more, visit [TSET.ok.gov](#).

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