Shareholder Advocacy and Nutrition

Based on the ethical premise that investment decisions are made not solely for financial advantage, but can also generate returns that produce economic prosperity, embrace environmental stewardship and enhance social responsibility, Trinity Health uses an activist approach to engage in shareholder advocacy.

Trinity Health Shareholder Advocacy program advances the organization's mission and core values by harnessing influence as shareowners in Fortune 500 companies to improve corporate performance on a variety of environmental and social concerns, including access to nutrition.

Nutrition Shareholder Advocacy at Trinity Health

As a shareholder in the country's largest food and beverage, grocery retailers and media companies, Trinity Health has joined with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) to advance nutritional issues, encourage companies to create strong nutrition policies, improve the nutritional profiles of their product portfolios, market food products responsibly, increase access to healthy choices, and communicate clearly with consumers about the nutritional content of their offering. With a specific focus on childhood nutrition and obesity, Trinity Health is working to establish new, healthier norms in the marketing environment for children and ensure that childhood obesity rates fall in all communities.

Influencing the Issue of Childhood Obesity

Along with ICCR, Trinity Health has engaged in numerous activities, such as:

- Urging food, restaurant, retail and media companies to join the Council of Better Business Bureaus' (BBB) Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI), which outlines specific guidelines in the food and beverage, restaurant and media sectors. The CFBAI serves as an initial yet critical step companies can take in confronting the childhood obesity epidemic. The goals established by CFBAI are extensive, and can be found beginning on page 6 of, the BBBs' CFBAI Program and Core Principles Statement, 4th Edition, January 2014.
- Filing a shareholder resolution with McDonald's, asking the company to assess its policy responses to public concerns regarding linkages of fast food to childhood obesity, diet-related diseases and impacts on children's health.
- Participating in the planning and development of two multi-stakeholder roundtables on nutrition issues in both 2013 and 2016, which focused on corporate leadership and in-store marketing strategies to address and impact childhood obesity.
- Urging McDonald's to recognize obesity as a risk in its annual report, articulate a goal for increasing the proportion of the menu that is healthy, increase the proportion of Happy Meals that meet nutrition standards, bring international commitments on nutritional improvement and responsible marketing in conformity with domestic ones, remove Ronald McDonald from schools, and study the nutritional content of marketing in communities of color as compared with marketing in white communities.

Results of Shareholder Engagement on Nutrition

As a result of various shareholder engagement activities by Trinity Health, a number of issues have been addressed with national retailers and manufacturers:
• Target established a Food Social Responsibility Committee in its grocery division out of recognition that the growth of the grocery business raises both social responsibility and sustainability issues. It is also looking at all aspects of its grocery operation through the lens of wellness, including extending healthy food choices and developing in-store presentations of healthy foods.

• Walmart has developed several initiatives to promote healthy eating, including having more than 30 percent of its private label food products, labeled: Great for You. Shareholders have also encouraged healthy checkout lines without candy.

• General Mills has agreed to stop advertising in schools and to children under the age of six. They are being urged to improve the nutrition profile of its products, especially related to the reduction of sodium.

• Kellogg has committed to disclose more information on how it is improving the nutrition profile of its products.

• Mondelez, formerly known as Kraft Foods – which also includes billion-dollar brands such as Oreo, Triscuit and Nabisco – has made commitments to improve the nutritional profile of its snacks and increase portion control offerings (products under 200 calories). Its 2020 goals include a 10 percent reduction in both sodium and saturated fats and a 25 percent increase in whole grains. It has agreed to eliminate advertising to children under 12. It further plans to have 50 percent of its revenues come from healthier snacks and to devote 70 percent of its new product development efforts to healthier snacks.

• McDonald's began offering low-fat white and fat-free chocolate milk jugs from cows not treated with artificial growth hormone; both have become popular choices in Happy Meals.

Other Efforts

Branded Characters
With an understanding of the strong influence that the use of brand mascots and media characters can have on children's food choices and diet, Trinity Health has been working to improve nutritional considerations in the use of characters:

• Time Warner has been asked to assess its policy regarding the use of licensed characters and their possible link to childhood obesity, diet-related diseases and other impacts on children's health. As a result, a meeting was held with Warner Brothers Licensed Characters and the Cartoon Network, in which they were asked to define how nutrition was taken into account in its character licensing agreements. They were also asked to disclose the percentage of food and beverage ads on the Cartoon Network that meet the standards of the CFBAI.

Digital Media

• Through a shareholder proposal with Alphabet (Google), the company was asked to issue a report regarding concerns raised about deceptive advertising to children, childhood obesity and public and private initiatives to eliminate or restrict food marketing to youth. As a result, Alphabet outlined its new procedures to keep videos that heavily market food, beverages and toys—bundled as "kids" meals—off its YouTube Kids channel app. They also agreed to review the Children's Rights and Business Principles and Children’s Rights Impact Assessment (developed by UNICEF, Save the Children and the UN Global Compact for Businesses), and to meet with shareholders in the fall of 2016.

Nutrition & Community Investing
In addition to shareholder advocacy efforts, the Trinity Health Community Investing Program lends capital to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). These are mission-driven organizations providing credit, financial and technical services to low-income and underserved people at the local level. Through CDFIs, Trinity Health has been investing in communities using low-interest rate loans to leverage and to advance community benefit. Community health and well-being are vital components of being a People-Centered Health System. For example, in 2014 a Trinity Health loan was used to leverage additional financial support via the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), providing financial support to Ohio grocery stores and other healthy food retailers operating or expanding in underserved communities with the goal of eliminating urban food deserts across the state.

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