

AAPD Leadership Perspective on the AAPD Foundation's Collaboration with the Coca-Cola Foundation

A Brief Summary of Actions from AAPD Foundation President Joel H. Berg

The AAPD will shortly announce a capital campaign to raise \$6 million for the AAPD Foundation, of which approximately \$500,000 - \$600,000 is expected to come from its own members and the balance from outside corporate and corporate foundation commitments. The campaign will be initiated in New York at the Annual Session, where we expect to announce several large corporate donations in the six and seven figure range, one of which is the Coca-Cola Foundation.

This commitment from the Coke Foundation is a large, unrestricted gift to the AAPD Foundation's endowment to fund independent research. Universities or other independent university-related entities selected by the AAPD (after a competitive process using an RFP-type protocol) will conduct the research. The gift does not involve endorsements, sponsorships or other relationships or affiliations. The Coca-Cola Foundation distributes millions of dollars annually to non-profit entities, including large grants to Habitat for Humanity and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. We hope to leverage this interest on the part of the Coca-Cola Company and its Foundation in the oral health of children.

A Position Statement from AAPD Executive Director John S. Rutkauskas

The AAPD and AAPDF leadership firmly believes that this collaboration is in the best interest of children. Both AAPD members and parents should be assured that we have never – and will never - endorse *any* consumer product from *any* corporate sponsor. That would not be in the best interests of the AAPD, parents or the children we serve.

The Foundation's research topics and protocol – and its choice of consumer education messages – have always been chosen by its Board, comprised primarily of pediatric dentists. This is a donation from Coca-Cola's Foundation to our Foundation. We genuinely believe that we can make a big difference in promoting responsible choices for parents regarding their children's dental health and overall health.

A Brief Statement on Oral Disease and Soft Drinks from AAPD President David K. Curtis (as quoted by the Associated Press)

Scientific evidence is certainly not clear on the exact role that soft drinks play in terms of children's oral disease. One of the hallmarks of our Academy is to urge parents to make wise nutritional choices. We will continue to espouse good overall nutrition and to urge parents to allow snacking only in moderation.

A Relevant Research Update from AAPD President-elect Paul A. Reggiardo

Most recently (*Pediatric Dentistry*, July/Aug 2002), Roos and Donly compared plaque pH after a substrate challenge of diet (sugar-free) and regular soft drinks. The research concluded, despite the presence of phosphoric and citric acids in both products, that while regular cola possessed a greater acid challenge potential, "in this clinical trial the pH associated with either soft drink did not reach the critical pH which is expected for enamel demineralization and dissolution."

Do we need more information on consumption patterns? Yes. When independent research, properly funded, answers these types of questions concerning beverage consumption by children and adolescents, then we can figure out the preventive strategies we should recommend. These recommendations should be supported by science and not by traditional beliefs or common knowledge.

As you recognize in view of your experience with patients, societal trends of increased soda consumption and increased childhood obesity does not make for "cause and effect" or good science.

For example, caries rates have decreased dramatically in the past 50 years, during the same time that soda consumption has also increased. But of course, that does not mean the two are related. The AAPD and AAPDF stand behind science and the advancement of scientific research. We continue to support quality research and responsible public education based upon scientific facts. This is the manner in which we can live up to our commitment to protecting the health and well-being of America's children.