



Girl Scouts of the USA

Encouraging Healthy Living Among Girls

Girl Scouting has a long-standing commitment to the well-being of girls and a unique understanding of the complex issue of girls' health. Our experience and research, including our research report *The New Normal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living*, indicates that girls have a view of health that combines good nutrition and physical fitness with emotional and social well-being. Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) knows that teaching girls about making healthy decisions means teaching them how to decide, not telling girls what to decide. Girl Scouting offers more than 60 badges related to healthy living and has a historic emphasis on health to educate and empower girls to take action to strengthen their physical and emotional health and positively impact their communities and the world. Adequate progress is not being made to ensure our young people live healthy lives and we believe all sectors must be involved in developing solutions. Girl Scouts is looking for opportunities to assist Congress in improving how we as a country promote the health of young people, especially girls.

GSUSA's Two Key Principles on Healthy Living:

1. Policy solutions should embrace a holistic definition of health rather than focusing on a single aspect of children's health.
2. Community-based organizations that serve youth, including the Girl Scouts, should be seen as vital partners in developing and delivering solutions in the area of health. Schools cannot address this crisis alone.

Girl Scouts urges Congress to consider these principles when making decisions impacting the health of young people, and is seeking multiple legislative vehicles to make it happen. Specifically, the **Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act (IMPACT Act)** embodies the Girl Scouts' key principles and as such, is a prime example of positive action to encourage healthy living among girls.

Legislative Recommendations:

1. Co-sponsor the **IMPACT Act**, an Act that:

- Provides resources to communities to encourage cross-sector collaborations for improving the health of young people.
- Ensures that these community partnerships approach youth health comprehensively by addressing physical activity, nutrition, and emotional wellness.

To co-sponsor the IMPACT Act, call Rep. Lowey's office at 225-6506 or Rep. Bono's office at 225-5330.

2. Co-Sponsor the **PLAY Every Day Act** (HR 2045). The Act provides resources to communities to create coalitions that work to remove barriers that prevent children and families from living healthy, active lives.

To co-sponsor the PLAY Act, call Rep. Mark Udall's office at 225-2161 or Rep. Granger's office at 225-5701.

Cross-sector collaborations and programs must stress the importance of all aspects of healthy living, including physical activity, nutrition and emotional wellness, in order to reverse the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. It is vital to create an environment that gives healthy living the social significance and relevance necessary to encourage children to adopt healthy behaviors from an early age. Research has shown that incorporating healthy living education and activities into children's daily lives is effective when designed to address health holistically. Only through a deeper community collaboration can we truly advance our efforts to have the nation's young people develop a lifetime of good health.