



INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY

PRESS RELEASE

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About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Geneva.

Time for health professionals to get active on food and farm policy

New Healthy Food Action website makes action easy

MINNEAPOLIS – Health professionals are on the front lines of America's broken food system, linked to the current obesity epidemic as well as a surge in related, costly diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. While the health community sees the downstream impacts of the food system every day, it often gets left out of national debates about food and farm policy in Washington. A new website sets out to change that.

Healthy Food Action (www.healthyfoodaction.org) makes it simple for health professionals—nurses, dietitians, physicians, public health workers, social workers and others—to engage in major public policy debates that affect our food system. It provides both vital information and easy-to-use tools to contact legislators, government officials and companies.

“Health professionals were the key to curbing tobacco use in our country. That kind of leadership is desperately needed to turn around our unhealthy, obesogenic food environment, and to get more sustainable farms growing healthy foods,” said David Wallinga, M.D., director of the Food and Health program at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). Wallinga also serves as the William T. Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellow in Food Systems and Public Health at the University of Minnesota.

Current food and farm policy largely incentivizes the production and consumption of unhealthy foods while encouraging practices on the farm—such as pesticide use and excessive antibiotic use—that contribute to more disease and worsen public health. Adds Wallinga, “By speaking out, health professionals can lend their unique, collective voice to public policy debates around farming and food—a voice to ensure these policies are consistent with better health.”

In the coming months, Healthy Food Action will focus on the routine feeding of arsenic to poultry, the excessive use of antibiotics in raising food animals and the U.S. Farm Bill. Healthy Food Action is a project of IATP.

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