



Fact Sheet
Keystone Food and Nutrition Roundtable
Creation of the Smart Choices Program
December 2009

Food and Nutrition Roundtable Background

The Keystone Food and Nutrition Roundtable was created and convened by The Keystone Center and comprised of diverse stakeholders involved with nutrition and food. They include major producers and distributors, nutritionists and public health experts, consumer and health advocates, as well as observers from relevant US Government Agencies. The Roundtable began its deliberations in January 2007 with the goal of collectively seeking to implement comprehensive, science-based strategies to address the nation's food and nutrition challenges. Keystone served as the independent convenor and facilitator for the Roundtable. The facilitation team lent its expertise in process design, negotiation, and mediation to its members by providing:

- A neutral forum and venue for Roundtable participants to learn from and engage in constructive dialogue with members holding different views from their own;
- An opportunity to deepen mutual understanding and build productive new relationships through informal discussions with other members; and
- An opportunity to work collaboratively to address challenges of mutual interest.

Roundtable Focus

During its first meeting the group agreed to focus its efforts in two areas:

- The Nutrition Facts Panel—the group drafted a letter that was later submitted to the FDA as comment to their Proposed Rulemaking on Possible changes to the NFP (see attached letter)
- Developing a uniform, universal, front-of-package (FOP) nutritional icon labeling system which identifies more nutritious choices of food and beverages across product categories. Development of this system was part of a broader effort to drive improvements in the American diet.

In November 2008, the Roundtable held its final in-person plenary meeting on the topic of the Smart Choices Program. Keystone finalized its role in the project shortly after the final Plenary Conference Call held on March 31, 2009. Any future Roundtable meetings will focus on issues that will be mutually identified and discussed by Keystone staff and Roundtable members.

Creating the Smart Choices Program

Roundtable members worked diligently over the course of 2 ½ years to create a program that would be rigorous, easily understood, credible, and sustainable. Throughout the negotiations, participants were guided by the following foundational context and principles:

- Provide an easy and simple to use system that will encourage consumers to choose nutritious and healthy food products.
- Reduce diet-related chronic disease, including obesity and heart disease, through informed decision-making around food and diet choices, focusing on the needs of the entire U.S. population.
- Align with existing regulatory frameworks and national nutrition policy.
- Be based on scientific consensus and aligned with and in furtherance of US Dietary Guidelines, supplemented by other federal definitions.

- Link consumer food choice to the Dietary Guidelines / MyPyramid, thereby encouraging understanding and use of these programs.
- Be clearly informed by calorie content.
- Encourage innovation among producers for development of more nutritious food choices.
- Be sustainable—both durable over time and flexible enough to respond to new information.
- Enhance consumers' understanding, awareness and use of nutrition information, including the Nutrition Facts Panel and FOP labeling, through appropriate and complementary education.

Throughout the process, the need for outside resources became evident; in turn Roundtable members provided

- Hired a research firm, Perception Research Services, to design and conduct original consumer research
- Commissioned a graphic design firm, Anthem NY, to design the logo and create the program name.
- Hired a PR firm, Weber Shandwick, to assist with communications around the announcement of the SCP, development of a temporary website, and media training.
- Received applications through an RFP created by the Roundtable, to hire a manager of the Smart Choices Program that would be responsible for implementation and administration of the program once it was complete.

The Keystone Center continues to serve as a resource for information connected to the Smart Choices Program as it evolves in the marketplace. Additional meetings convened by Keystone to discuss the Smart Choices Program are not planned at this time; however Keystone does anticipate exploring the possibility of reconvening the Food and Nutrition Roundtable and identifying a new topic to serve as the heart of such discussions.