

First ‘Global Obesity Business Forum’ convenes at UNC-Chapel Hill

Senior executives from 14 major global food
and beverage companies participate

SENIOR FOOD INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES and leading international nutrition scientists and medical experts convened Oct. 29–30, 2007, at UNC-Chapel Hill for the first Global Obesity Business Forum to discuss solutions to one of today’s most dangerous global health issues—obesity.

The forum is an initiative of the UNC-Chapel Hill Interdisciplinary Obesity Center (IDOC).

“A large number of countries, as well as most major global food companies, are grappling with ways to address this major global problem,” says Dr. Barry Popkin, director of IDOC and Distinguished Professor of global nutrition in the UNC Schools of Public Health and Medicine who specializes in studies of the dynamic shifts in diet, activity, and obesity occurring across the globe.

“Ways to create a common playing field to promote healthier diets include a vast array of regulatory, taxation and labeling approaches,” Popkin says. “We know that around the world, people prefer sweet, fatty and delicious foods and drinks. The question is how to make those foods generally healthy and how to reduce caloric intake to address the large increases in obesity and diabetes seen globally.”

The forum combined scholarly research related to obesity with corporate case studies and proposed roadmaps for action. Short



Dr. Barry Popkin

presentations and in-depth group discussions were held on several key areas related to caloric and noncaloric sweeteners and fats.

For more information on the forum, visit <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/idoc/gobf>. ■

The event was chaired by Henry J. (Hank) Cardello, a former executive with Coca-Cola, RJR Nabisco, and General Mills, who serves as the forum’s industry executive partner. Corporate participants included senior vice presidents and other senior executives from most major global food and beverage companies, including Cadbury Schweppes, Campbell Soup Co., Coca-Cola, Danone, General Mills, Hershey Co., Kellogg’s, Kraft Foods, Nestlé, McDonald’s, Mead Johnson Nutritionals, Starbucks, Unilever and Wyeth Nutrition.