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MEDIA RELEASE

October 12, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Carroll County public high schools receive education on healthier vending machine choices

Time to “put the brakes” on unhealthy snacks!

Westminster, MD – (October 12, 2011) – Concerned about the rising rates of childhood obesity, The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County is trying to put the brakes on unhealthy vending machine snack choices. On October 3, 2011, The Partnership will kick off an educational effort in all ten Carroll County Public School (CCPS) high schools to raise student awareness about how to make better vending machine choices.

The vending machine snacks will be classified as Green, Yellow, or Red, similar to a stoplight. Green “Go” snacks are healthy; yellow “Slow” snacks are moderately healthy; and red “Stop and Think” snacks are the unhealthiest. All rankings are based on the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This method of rating food is endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and used across the United States as a reliable method for encouraging healthier food choices. Through the *Healthy Eating-Active Living* grant from Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, and with the support of CCPS, The Partnership hopes that students will think about the nutritional value of their snack choices, and choose Green “Go” snacks versus unhealthy Red snacks.

During October and November, nutritional signs that rate the vending machine snack types (e.g., chips, pretzels, granola bars, candy) and prompt thoughtful snack choices will be posted in all CCPS High Schools. Magnets will be placed on all vending machines as point-of-purchase reminders to make wise choices. This effort may encourage healthier choices by the students and lays the groundwork for bringing healthier options to high school vending machines.

Advertisements are planned for the Town Mall in Westminster and in various shops around our community. High school morning announcements, the schools' newsletters, and an electronic brochure emailed to all CCPS high school families will highlight this educational effort and bring awareness to the program and its goals.

The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, Inc., an affiliate of Carroll Hospital Center and the Carroll County Health Department, is a private nonprofit organization working to improve health by connecting people, inspiring action, and strengthening community.

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