



# Trends in the Economy

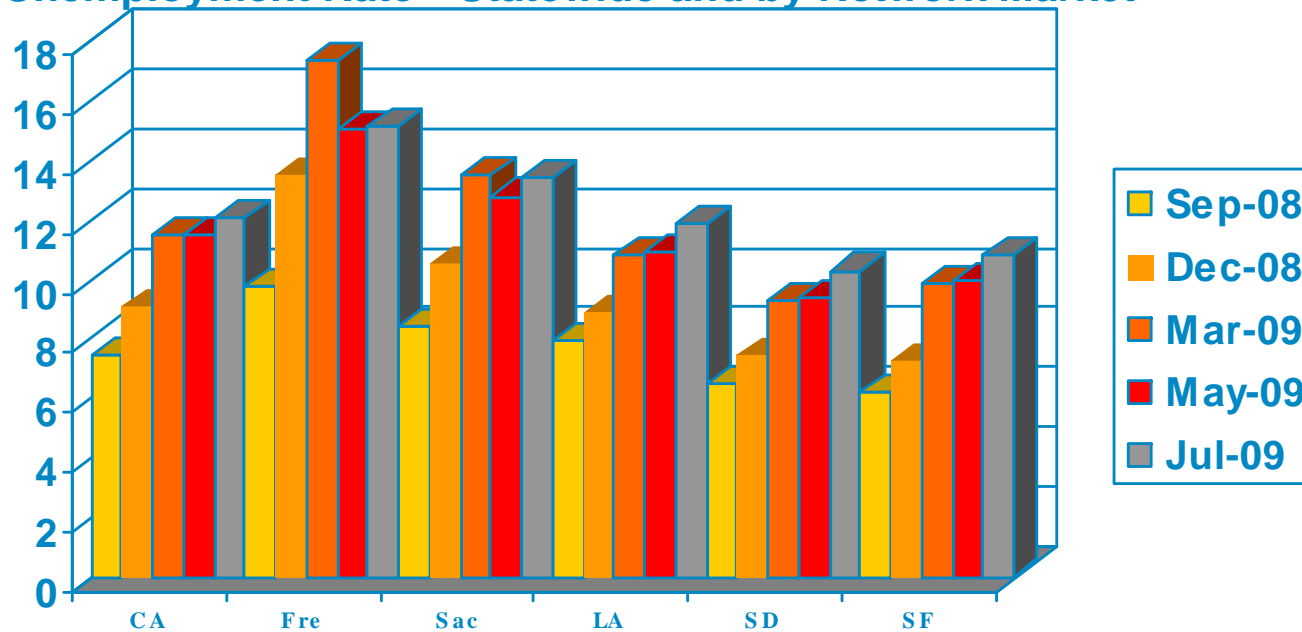
## How They Influence Health Behaviors

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# Unemployment growing

Unemployment Rate—Statewide and by Network Market



# Unemployment trends (cont.)

- **27% higher than nation, widening gap**
- **Coastal markets (SF, SD) unemployment rising faster**



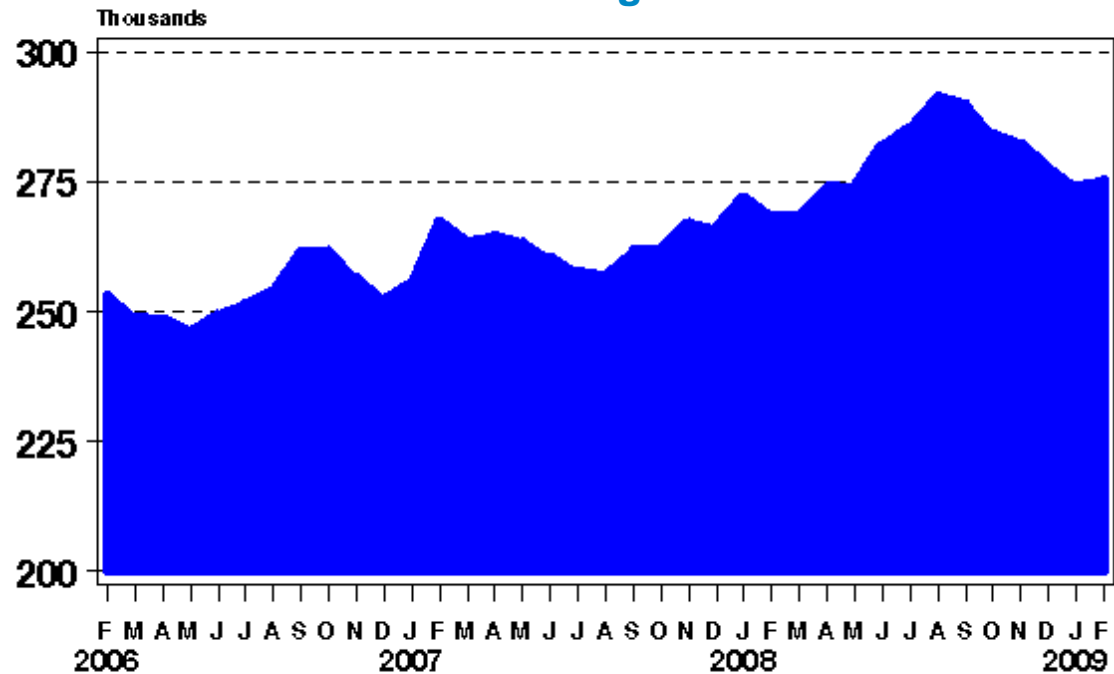
# Consumer Prices

- **LA Times article reported 2004 – 2006 prices of very high calorie foods dropped by 1.8% whereas prices of low calorie foods increased by 19.5%** (March 2009; CDC, University of Washington sources)



# Consumer Price Index

## Fruits and Vegetables



Bureau of Labor Statistics; tracks 16 food and beverage categories  
July figures remain high though eased slightly



# Consumer Price Index (cont.)

- **Food pyramid guidelines conflict with pricing trends**



- F/V prices highest of all categories tracked
- Fast food prices remain well below other consumer products



# Benchmark survey

- **Every Fall/Winter 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008**
- **Media tracking/assessment; addt'l Network interventions**
- **In-person interviews**
  - **Shopping malls in San Diego, LA, Riverside, Bakersfield, Fresno, Sac, Santa Ana, and SF/Oakland**
  - **Network target population; women (FSP and FSE)**
- **Today, report on findings in a one year period (2007 – 2008) that focus on prevailing social normative and other beliefs, assess attitudes and perceptions**



# Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions

## Trend is moving in wrong direction on seriousness of adult obesity epidemic in California.

- Decrease from 81% to 72% in perceived severity of problem among recipients from 2007 to 2008
- More than a quarter doubt seriousness in 2008.
- Even knowledge about children's epidemic is slipping from 2007 level
- More doubts--disease prevention efficacy of f/v consumption



# Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions (cont.)

**Significant decline in the proportion of food stamp recipients agreeing that health problems may develop from too little f/v consumption, though level of agreement still remains very high (80+%).**

- A significant decline in the proportion strongly agreeing.
- The same pattern applies to PA.
- These data are similar to the knowledge data on the efficacy of public health behavioral recommendations; in general, the vast majority audience accepts their efficacy.



# Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions (cont.)

**About half believe that fruit and vegetables are too expensive (current measure was introduced in 2007).**

- **Significant increase with regard to vegetable prices among recipients – 44% to 49%.**
- **About a quarter of audiences report non-price related access problems (quality, location); this has remain constant since 2007.**



# Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions (cont.)

## Family change behaviors have declined since 2007. Declines in:

- Daily efforts to make it easy for kids to eat fruit/vegetables and be physically active (from 2/3 to 1/2)
- Activity with kids (52% to 36%).
- Setting limits for unhealthy food and TV watching (about 20 - 30% decline)



# Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions (cont.)

## Declines in environmental change advocacy since 2007.

- About 1 in 10 reported talking to a school official; this represents a decline since 2007 (17% to 7%).
- Smaller percentages reported talking to community leaders or neighborhood groups.



# What Explains 2007 – 2008 Downward Trend?

- **Recession** is likely forcing some families to rely on cheaper, more calorie-rich foods.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables consistently viewed as more expensive. **Prices** going up.
- **Psychological stresses** may be altering food preferences.
- All of the above may be **lowering** the saliency of **health concerns/issues**.



# What Explains 2007 – 2008 Downward Trend? (cont.)

- **Movement of new people into poverty group due to recession; new entrants may have less coping skills.**



# Where We Stand

- **Unprecedented challenge to the health behaviors of Californians**
  - **Especially for healthy eating, which costs more**



# Findings

- **Recommendations for programs (selected):**
  - **Continued focus on access**
  - **More attention given to price concerns, particularly during the current recession**
  - **Focus on getting audiences engaged and involved with issue**
    - **Many moms interested in communiting with others about family health**



# Responsive to the times

- **Adapt**
- **Relevant**
- **Re-frame issues**
- **Keep eye on the “prize” – health!**



**Thank you!**

