



May 31, 2017

The Honorable Thomas E. Price, MD
Secretary U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Scott Gottlieb, MD
Commissioner Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20993

To whom it may concern,

We, the undersigned local health departments, write to urge the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to maintain the current July 2018 compliance date for the updated Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods. The FDA should not delay implementation as changes to the Nutrition Fact label are both feasible and necessary. Offering an extension to comply with this federal change denies the American people information to act in the interests of their health.

For the first time, the Nutrition Facts label will require disclosure of the amount of added sugars contained in a product serving and include a percent Daily Value (DV) for added sugars. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends less than 10% of total calories come from added sugars, but many Americans exceed this limit. The average daily intake of added sugars of American adults is approximately 13% of total calories consumed.ⁱ Children's consumption is even greater, with approximately 16% of total calories consumed coming from added sugars.ⁱⁱ Providing a DV for added sugars informs consumers whether they are nearing their daily limit and equips consumers with the information necessary to choose products to support their health and the health of their families.

Some food industry members have asked the Department of Health and Human Services to delay implementation of the updated Nutrition Facts label for an additional three years, until 2021. However, companies like Nestlé and Mars Incorporated support the updated Nutrition Facts label. Several food companies have already updated their labels to reflect the new requirements, which demonstrates the feasibility of these changes.

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BALTIMORE CITY
BOSTON
CHICAGO
CLEVELAND
DALLAS COUNTY
DENVER
DETROIT
FULTON COUNTY (ATLANTA)
HOUSTON
KANSAS CITY
LONG BEACH
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MARICOPA COUNTY (PHOENIX)
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY (MIAMI)
MINNEAPOLIS
MULTNOMAH COUNTY (PORTLAND)
NEW YORK CITY
PHILADELPHIA
SACRAMENTO
SAN ANTONIO
SAN DIEGO COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO
SANTA CLARA COUNTY (SAN JOSE)
SEATTLE - KING COUNTY
SOUTHERN NV (LAS VEGAS)
TARRANT COUNTY (FORT WORTH)
WASHINGTON, D.C.

As local health departments, we are charged with protecting and promoting the health of our local populations. Reducing consumption of added sugars is important to helping consumers achieve healthy eating patterns and meet nutrient needs within calorie limits. We implore the Food and Drug Administration to maintain the current compliance date for the updated Nutrition Facts label. Doing otherwise stands in conflict with public health interests.

Sincerely,

Baltimore City Health Department

Boston Public Health Commission

Chicago Department of Public Health

Houston Health Department

Kansas City, Missouri Health Department

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Minneapolis Health Department

Multnomah County Health Department

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Public Health – Seattle & King County

ⁱ Ervin RB, Ogden CL. Consumption of added sugars among U.S. adults, 2005–2010. NCHS data brief, no 122. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2013.

ⁱⁱ Ervin RB, Kit BK, Carroll MD, Ogden CL. Consumption of added sugar among U.S. children and adolescents, 2005–2008. NCHS data brief no 87. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2012.