

April 23, 2019

Dear Chairs Bishop and Hoeven and Ranking Members Fortenberry and Merkley:

We applaud the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) support for consumer-awareness education campaigns for menu labeling and the updated Nutrition Facts panel as part of its Nutrition Innovation Strategy. These nutrition policies will help Americans make informed choices about what they eat and encourage companies to provide healthier food options.

We write to highlight that, to be successful, the agency needs dedicated funding for education efforts to enhance public understanding and their policies' effectiveness. As you craft the FY 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies spending bill, we respectfully request \$3,000,000 for consumer-awareness education campaigns for menu labeling (\$1,500,000) and the updated Nutrition Facts panel (\$1,500,000).

Menu labeling, which requires calorie labeling for menu items and prepared foods in chain restaurants, supermarkets, and convenience stores, is in effect but enforcement begins May 2019. The updated Nutrition Facts panel, which updates several aspects of the label and for the first time, allows consumers to know how much added sugars is in food and beverages, goes into effect in January 2020 for large manufacturers and in January 2021 for small manufacturers. Funding is needed to ensure that consumers understand and fully benefit from these policies, which are concrete steps to improve transparency and equip consumers to better understand the impact of their food choices on their health.

Nutrition information is important to address the public health crises of obesity and diabetes, which increases the risk for several types of cancer, heart disease, and numerous other diseases and conditions. A 2018 review of nearly 30 studies from the well-respected Cochrane Collaboration found that menu labeling helps people reduce their calories by about 50 calories per meal, on average. It also spurs the reformulation of existing food items and the introduction of nutritionally improved items. A recent Harvard study found restaurant menu calorie labeling could prevent up to 41,000 cases of childhood obesity and could save over \$4.6 billion in healthcare costs over ten years.

Additional monies directed towards consumer education are needed for the FDA to undertake a broader and more powerful dissemination and education strategy. For instance, the FDA could conduct additional message testing through focus groups and/or polling to determine effective messages for educating consumers about the updated Nutrition Facts panel, as the agency has done with menu labeling. With resources, the FDA could also engage in broader collaboration with public health coalitions and organizations that represent education, nutrition, and other health professionals, as well as groups that work with lower-income or disadvantaged constituencies.

Dedicated resources for consumer-awareness education campaigns for both menu labeling and Nutrition Facts will support the FDA's commitment through the Nutrition Innovation Strategy to link effective labeling strategies to efforts to reduce diet-related disease. Increased recognition,

understanding, and use of these new labels will help consumers make more informed choices about what they eat.

Sincerely,

American Heart Association

American Institute for Cancer Research

American Public Health Association

American Society for Nutrition

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists

B. Komplete

Balanced

Berkeley Media Studies Group

Center for Science in the Public Interest

ChangeLab Solutions

Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (WA State)

Children's Bureau of Southern California

Community Health Improvement Partners

Consumer Federation of America

Earthjustice

Healthy Food America

Healthy Kingsport

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Jump IN for Healthy Kids

Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University

Michigan Advocates for Healthy Checkouts

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National WIC Association

NuTek Food Science

Pinnacle Prevention

Public Health Advocates

Public Health Institute

Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness

Rhode Island Food Policy Council

RI Food Dealers Association

RI Healthy Schools Coalition

SALTRAX

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education

Teachers Health Trust

The Food Trust

The Milestone Group

Trust for America's Health

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Nutrition Research Institute