

February 24, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Price:

As you are aware, the compliance date for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's rule for revising the Nutrition Facts Label is July 26, 2018. The public health importance of this measure and the need to maintain this date cannot be overstated. For the first time, Nutrition Facts will include a line— and a percent Daily Value—for added sugars. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans concluded: “Added sugars account on average for almost 270 calories, or more than 13 percent of calories, per day in the U.S. population.”^{vi} The Guidelines recommends that Americans limit their added-sugars consumption to less than 10 percent of calories. Critical to making this shift is giving consumers the information they need. Any delay in the compliance deadline deals a blow to the health of our nation, especially to vulnerable populations that disproportionately suffer from obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and tooth decay—chronic diseases associated with the overconsumption of added sugars.

Moreover, the food industry has had ample notice of this change and opportunity to be prepared. The proposed rule was published in March 2014, and the supplemental proposed rule to include the added-sugars line was published in July 2015. The final Nutrition Facts rule was announced May 20, 2016, and published in the Federal Register on May 27, 2016. In addition, manufacturers with annual food sales of less than \$10 million have an additional year to make these changes. Finally, FDA coordinated its nutrition initiatives—the elimination of partially hydrogenated oils and the updates to the Nutrition Facts label—to all become effective in the summer of 2018 to lessen the burden on industry.ⁱⁱ

For all of these reasons, the undersigned groups and individuals ask for a commitment from the Department to maintain the compliance date of July 26, 2018, for the Nutrition Facts label.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
American Institute for Cancer Research
American Public Health Association
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN)
B. Komplete
Barbara J. Moore, PhD, FTOS
Center for Communications, Health and the Environment (CECHE)
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Consumers Union
Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina

Food Policy Action
Healthy Food America
Healthy School Food Maryland
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
Oldways
Public Health Advocates
Public Health Institute
Real Food for Kids
Real Food for Kids – Montgomery
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) Board of Directors
The Praxis Project
Trust for America's Health
UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity
Union of Concerned Scientists

CC:

The Honorable Stephen Ostroff, MD
Acting Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

The Honorable Michael L. Young
Acting Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Please address your response to:

Jim O'Hara
Director, Health Promotion Policy
Center for Science in the Public Interest
1220 L Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
johara@cspinet.org

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/a-closer-look-at-current-intakes-and-recommended-shifts/>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration. Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label. January 17, 2017. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm>