### Nutrition Labeling on Menus at Restaurants

**Menu labeling allows Americans to exercise personal responsibility and make informed choices for a growing part of their diets**

- A national law was passed in March 2010 requiring calories to be posted on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants with 20 or more outlets.
  - A labeling requirement at additional restaurants would help people make informed choices for a greater proportion of their diet. People need nutrition information to manage their weight and reduce the risk of or manage heart disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure, which are leading causes of death, disability, and high health-care costs.
- Approximately 26 million people are employed by government, national parks, hospitals, and state universities. *(Federal Government: 2.0 million, State and Local Government: 16.6 million, National Parks: 22,000, Hospitals: 5.7 million, State Universities: 1.6 million).*

### Menu Labeling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Covered by National law</th>
<th>% covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>579,000</td>
<td>231,000 (1,069 chains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery stores</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>42,000 (570 chains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience stores</td>
<td>144,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other food service</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending machines</td>
<td>7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- People want nutrition information from restaurants; 78% of Americans support menu labeling.
- Without nutrition information, it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions. For example, Subway’s Chicken & Bacon Ranch contains more calories (580) than the Steak & Cheese (400).

### Menu Labeling Is One Important Way to Address Obesity/Nutrition

- American adults and children consume on average one third of their calories from eating out.
  - Studies link eating out with obesity and higher caloric intakes. Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant compared to a meal at home.
  - The average American eats out six meals a week; that is enough to lead to over-consuming calories not just on the day the person eats out, but also to exceed calorie requirements over the course of a whole week.
When eating out, people eat more saturated fat and fewer nutrients, such as calcium and fiber, than at home.

Three-quarters of adults report using nutrition labels on packaged food, and using labels is associated with eating more healthful diets. Studies show that providing nutrition information at restaurants can help people make lower calorie choices.

- A Stanford University study of Starbucks restaurants found that menu labeling reduced calories in customers’ food choices by 14%.
- A New York City study found 15% of customers reported using menu labeling and purchased 100 fewer calories than customers who did not see or use the calorie information.

Menu labeling has spurred nutritional improvements in chain restaurant foods

- A key benefit of menu labeling in chain restaurants has been the reformulation of existing food items and the introduction of nutritionally improved items.
  - Cosi switched to reduced-fat dressing and half the cheese in their Signature Salad, reducing calories from 610 to 380.
  - Starbucks cut 5% of the calories and 15% of the fat from its pastry items and 14% of calories and 36% of fat from its beverages.
  - Taco Bell’s Fresco menu contains 8 items with 9 grams of fat or less including the Fresco Crunchy Taco with 150 cals verses 350 cals in the Taco Supreme.
  - Many popular chains have introduced smaller portions on their menus such as California Pizza Kitchen’s “Small Cravings,” the Cheesecake Factory’s “Small Plates and Snacks,” T.G.I.Friday’s “Right Portion, Right Price,” and Au Bon Pain’s “Au Bon Portions” to highlight their lower calorie menu options.

Who Would Guess?

- ...large movie theater popcorn with “butter” topping has over 1,600 cals
- ...cheese fries with ranch dressing contains 3,010 cals
- ...a tuna salad sandwich contains 50% more calories (720 cals) than a roast beef sandwich (460 cals)
- ...a cinnamon roll (510 cals) has more than double the calories in a glazed donut (220 cals)
- ...a 16 oz. latte contains 270 cals while a cappuccino contains 180 cals
- ... a side order of onion rings contains 900 cals, while a side order of French fries contains 590 cals
- ...a loaded baked potato contains 620 cals while a side of coleslaw contains 170 cals and the vegetable of the day has 60 cals
- ...a typical oriental chicken salad with dressing contains 750 cals while a hamburger at a sit down restaurant contains about 600 cals

For more information, contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202-777-8352 or nutritionpolicy@cspinet.org or visit www.menulabeling.org.