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## Assemblyman Karim Camara Announces Legislation Requiring Warning Labels on Sugary Drinks

Label will read: "SAFETY WARNING: DRINKING BEVERAGES WITH ADDED SUGAR CONTRIBUTES TO OBESITY, DIABETES AND TOOTH DECAY"

**New York, NY** – Today, Assemblyman Karim Camara was joined today by health experts to announce legislation he has introduced (Assembly Bill 10172) that will require health warning labels on certain beverages with added sugar, the size of the warning label being dictated by the size of the drink.

"We can't sit back and pretend that sugary drinks aren't harmful to people. We have a public health crisis, which is a direct result of people consuming too much sugar. The research is clear: too much sugar leads to health problems such as obesity and Diabetes. As a society, we have a moral obligation to educate people so they can make healthier choices," said Assemblyman Karim Camara, the sponsor of the bill.

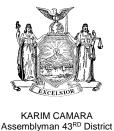
More than 20 years of peer-reviewed scientific research has shown sugary drinks to be a primary contributor to Type 2 Diabetes, especially in children. In August, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 40 percent of children born between the years 2000 and 2011 would develop Type 2 Diabetes in their lifetime.

According to the CDC, 35% of Americans are obese and 69% are overweight. Obesity-related conditions include some types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. In 2010, the CDC estimated 26 million people have diabetes. And now in 2014, just 4 years later, that estimate has increased by 3 million to 30 million people.

The goal of the sugary drink warning labels is to educate the public and lower consumption of these unhealthy drinks, similar to the goal of warning labels on cigarette packages. Since the beverage industry spent \$13 million in New York State in 2010 to oppose a proposed penny-per-ounce sugary drink tax, arguing that education is what was really needed, they were urged to support the bill.

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Consumer Affairs and Protection Chair said, "Studies have established a direct link between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and rising rates of obesity, diabetes, and other major health problems in New York and across the United States, which cause thousands of deaths and cost billions of dollars in health care spending annually. We must do everything we can to make the public aware of the serious risks incurred by the over-consumption of sugar. Many years ago, when faced with a similarly devastating public health crisis, we chose to place warning labels on cigarettes and other tobacco products to allow citizens to make more informed choices about what they purchase. Given the scientific evidence of sugar's negative consequences for our society, is not only appropriate, but incumbent, upon us to use similar warning labels with sugar-sweetened beverages."

"A sugary drink warning label is a smart way to educate consumers about the negative health impacts of sugary beverages," **said Nancy Huehnergarth, a nutrition policy consultant**. "Right now, the beverage industry bombards our kids with its own messages encouraging constant consumption. In 2010, for example, preschoolers viewed an average of 213 ads for sugary drinks and energy drinks, while children and teens watched an average of 277 and 406 ads, respectively."



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Assemblyman 43<sup>RD</sup> District Kings County

> Jim O'Hara, Director, Health Promotion Policy Center for Science in the Public Interest, asserted, "The science supports soda warning labels: Sugar drinks increase the risk of diabetes, obesity, and tooth decay. Why is Big Soda afraid of real consumer education?"

"In November we recognize American Diabetes Month to raise awareness about diabetes. An epidemic of obesity and subsequent type 2 diabetes has engulfed the United States, in part fueled by the increased consumption of calorie-dense sugar-sweetened beverages – beverages that can easily be substituted by no and low calorie beverages. Nearly 30 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes with more than 1.3 million adults in New York already diagnosed with diabetes. Another 86 million Americans have pre-diabetes and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Diabetes kills tens of thousands of Americans every year and results in disabling complications for thousands of others. The American Diabetes Association supports reducing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages through public information, education, and health policy, and applauds Assemblyman Camara for his interest in warning labels for sugar-sweetened beverages," stated Stephen Habbe, Northeast Advocacy Director for the American Diabetes Association.

"There is no doubt that consumption of sugary drinks has increased dramatically in recent decades. It is important for our government leaders to work with the public health community to identify, test and implement effective evidence-based strategies to help reverse this dangerous trend," stated Robin Vitale, Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. "The American Heart Association supports a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to combatting obesity which is a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. We are very interested in the proposed legislation by Assembly Member Camara as part of a broad range of public policy approaches addressing the consumption of sugary drinks."

According to Ryan Natividad, Health Policy Coordinator Coalition For Asian American Children And Families, "The effort to label sugar-sweetened beverages with safety warnings will create a tremendous impact in addressing the problems of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity in the Asian Pacific American community. With the ubiquity of unhealthy beverages, Asian Pacific Americans have fallen into traps set by beverage corporations as 9% of Asian Pacific Americans are diagnosed with diabetes. Within the Asian Pacific American community, diabetes rates go as high as 13% in the South Asian community. While Asian Pacific Americans do not typically show outward signs of obesity, the community is plagued with cardiovascular disease. We hope that labeling promotes dialogue regarding healthy eating and active living. If tobacco needs safety warnings, so should anything with large doses of sugar. '

Fitness and nutrition expert and personal trainer to Dr. Oz Donovan Green stated, "The health crisis we are witnessing involving obesity and type 2 diabetes are man-made illnesses created by a culture of mass consumption of unhealthy foods saturated with sugars and fats that combined with an increasingly sedentary lifestyle are contributing to a rapid decline in the quality of life of our children and adults. Every effort to decrease the consumption of sugar from our diets should be made. As a society we can't afford the expense to our health care system to treat this problem after that fact. Assemblyman Camara's legislation needs diligent action in Albany."

"The Latino Coalition for a Healthy California applauds Assemblyman Karim Camara's introduction of a bill requiring a warning label for sugary sweetened beverages. With the beverage industry spending billions of dollars per year in advertising designed to appeal to our children, especially our children of color, we need an unbiased label to help us make the best choice for our family's beverage purchases. The warning label will help cut through the slick advertising that completely disconnects sugary sweetened beverages' health risks from the larger-than-life images and feelings our children are bombarded with on a daily basis. By passing this legislation, the prevalence of obesity and diabetes among our children will start to reverse," stated Xavier Morales, Executive Director of the Latino Coalition for a Health California.

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