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Subject: NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S SODIUM WARNING RULE MAKING NYC THE FIRST U.S. MUNICIPALITY TO REQUIRE CHAIN RESTAURANTS TO POST SODIUM WARNINGS



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

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Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, February 24, 2016
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**NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S SODIUM
WARNING RULE MAKING NYC THE FIRST U.S. MUNICIPALITY TO REQUIRE CHAIN
RESTAURANTS TO POST SODIUM WARNINGS**

*Icon helps New Yorkers easily identify menu items that contain more sodium than is recommended to consume
in an entire day*

Enforcement of rule begins March 1st

High sodium intake can increase blood pressure and risk of heart disease and stroke

February 24, 2016 – Today, the New York State Supreme Court upheld the sodium warning rule, clearing the way for the City to enforce a rule that requires chain restaurants to post salt icons next to items with 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium – the total recommended daily limit. The rule also requires chain food service establishments to post a warning statement where customers place their orders. New York is the first city in the nation to require chain restaurants to post warning icons next to menu items that contain high levels of sodium. The sodium warning rule was passed unanimously on September 9, 2015 by the New York City Board of Health. Chains with 15 or more locations nationwide have until March 1st to comply with the new requirement before the possibility of receiving a fine. Chain such as Applebee's, Subway, TGI Friday's, and the Regal Entertainment Group movie theaters have already begun to implement the rule.

"If your meal has so much sodium that it merits a salt shaker on the menu, then – for the sake of your health – order something else," **said Mayor de Blasio**. "Too many New Yorkers are at risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke due to high sodium intake, and this salt shaker will help New Yorkers make better decisions about their diet -- ultimately leading to a healthier and quite possibly a longer life."

"The State Supreme Court's decision to uphold the sodium warning label rule is a win for the health of every New York City resident," **said Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "New Yorkers will now have the information necessary to make informed and better decisions about their diets and their health. We encourage everyone dining at these establishments to use this easily accessible information when making food choices."

"Sodium warnings are good public health policy," **said Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard N. Gottfried**. "More information helps people make smarter choices. Public health leadership works; it saves lives. I'm glad the courts have upheld this important initiative."

"The courts have spoken and New York City will now set the standard for high sodium labeling on restaurant menus. I applaud the Mayor's efforts and will do my part to see that this new rule will be applied statewide as the sponsor of



legislation in the Assembly (A8266). We cannot wait for the federal government to create new sodium guidelines. New Yorkers deserve to know what is in the food they order to make better choices for themselves and their children,” **said Assistant Assembly Speaker Felix W. Ortiz.**

"Americans deserve to know how much sodium is in their food. This sodium warning label identifies extreme levels of sodium on restaurant menus. Information like this will empower people to make choices that are better for their health. The science is clear: lowering sodium intake lowers blood pressure in adults and children. Lower blood pressure means better heart health for Americans,” **said Lawrence J. Appel, MD, MPH, a spokesperson for the American Heart Association, and the Director of the Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research.**

“From requiring calories on menus to getting rid of artificial trans-fat, New York City has led the way when it comes to improving our food environment,” **said Michael F. Jacobson, President of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.** “Now that the court has blessed the city’s sodium warnings on menus, we hope other cities consider similar measures aimed at reducing heart attack, stroke, and other sodium-related health problems.”

The sodium warning rule was enacted in 2015 to alert New Yorkers about chain restaurant foods with excessively high sodium. There’s a well-established link between high sodium intake and high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Heart disease is the leading cause of death nationally, contributing to one out of every four deaths. In 2013, nearly 17,000 people in New York City died from heart disease. The average New York City adult consumes nearly 40% more than the recommended daily limit of 2,300 mg.

The sodium warning label will be a key tool in efforts to reduce chronic disease, and close the health gaps between Whites and people of color. In our city, heart disease does not take all lives equally. For example, the rate of premature death from heart disease was about 80% higher among Black New Yorkers than White New Yorkers in 2013.

More information can be found at the agency’s website, nyc.gov/health.

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