

20 Public Health, Consumer Groups Call on FDA Not to Delay Nutrition Facts Labels*

Twenty public health and consumer groups have urged the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to maintain the original timeline for requiring long-awaited updates to the Nutrition Facts label—including a line for added sugars—that could help reduce the high rates of diet-related chronic diseases in the United States. In September 2017, the FDA proposed delaying the updated Nutrition Facts label from July 2018 until January 2020 for large companies and from July 2019 until January 2021 for small companies.

American Academy of Pediatrics

“The revised labels contain vital information that consumers need in order to make informed choices about the foods that they eat. Given the high rates of childhood obesity in the United States today, getting this information into the hands of consumers, especially parents, is essential to ensuring that the next generation of Americans has the knowledge that they need to grow up healthy.”

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

“Poor diet, physical inactivity, excess weight, and excess alcohol consumption are major risk factors for cancer, second only to tobacco use. In fact, one in five of the estimated 1.7 million cancer cases expected to be diagnosed this year can be attributed to these factors...Delaying the compliance dates keeps consumers from making informed decisions that can improve their health and reduce their cancer risk.”

American Diabetes Association

“The changes to the content and layout of the Nutrition Facts label included in the FDA’s 2016 final rules will help individuals with diabetes and those at risk for developing diabetes maintain healthy dietary practices...the Association urges the FDA to implement all the changes to the Nutrition Facts label as soon as possible...”

American Heart Association

“The rise in obesity rates and the prevalence of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer underscore the need to provide consumers with up-to-date and easy to understand nutrition information as soon as possible.”

American Medical Association

“The updated Nutrition Facts label is an opportunity to better equip consumers on strategies to improve their diets...Any delay in providing consumers with this much needed information will result in a continuing rise in diseases and conditions associated with poor nutritional and dietary choices.”

Big Cities Health Coalition

"Like the FDA, we are charged with protecting and promoting the public health. In light of that duty, we implore the FDA to maintain the current compliance date for the updated Nutrition Facts label. Any delay stands in conflict with public health interests."

Center for Science in the Public Interest

"Finally, the public health urgency of keeping to the original compliance dates is underlined by the recent release of new national data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing unacceptably high and rising obesity prevalence. The CDC reported all-time highs for these rates, with almost 40 percent of adult Americans having obesity. What's more, almost 19 percent of youth have obesity."

The Colorado Health Foundation

"As consumers manage their personal health, it is imperative for them to be able to understand the nutritional value of their foods and beverages, including how much added sugars they contain...the FDA should act quickly to implement the new Nutrition Facts labels without the proposed delay."

County of Santa Clara Public Health Department

"We urge the FDA to uphold its stated mission of advancing public health 'by helping the public get the accurate, science-based information they need to use medicines and foods to maintain and improve their health.' Keeping the original compliance dates for the updated Nutrition Facts label will make strides in the FDA's commitment to public health."

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

"Consumers currently utilize food labels to make choice for themselves and their families. A delay in updating the Nutrition Facts label limits access to higher quality information for the public to act in the best interest of their health."

National Association of County and City Health Officials

"Consumers cannot follow the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans' (DGA) advice on added sugars or potassium without the updated Nutrition Facts label's mandatory disclosures...we strongly urge the FDA not to delay the Nutrition Facts label compliance date and move forward with a timely implementation."

National Center for Health Research

"Given the FDA's public health mission and the high rates of diet-related chronic disease as well as cancer in America, the FDA should act quickly to ensure compliance with the new Nutrition Facts labels without the proposed delay. Delaying the compliance date harms the American public's health and well-being, and sets back larger public health efforts to reduce our country's disease epidemics."

National WIC Association

"The public health urgency of keeping to the original compliance dates is underlined by the recent release of national obesity data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), showing unacceptably high and rising prevalence rates. The CDC reported all-time high

prevalence—almost 40 percent of adult Americans have obesity and almost 19 percent of youth have obesity.”

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

“...we oppose any extension of the compliance deadlines articulated in these rules for two reasons. First, any delay deprives the public of accurate, scientific information critical to making informed food choices. Second, industry compliance by the current deadlines is feasible, as demonstrated by early adopters.”

Oldways

“Realistic serving sizes, bolder calorie counts, and listings for added sugar are all common-sense updates that will help families better align their eating habits with the principles of the Dietary Guidelines...We urge the FDA to prioritize the health of Americans, and act quickly in requiring a transition to the new Nutrition Facts labels.”

Orange County Food Access Coalition

“The updated Nutrition Facts labels are easier for consumers to understand and use, and also provide critical information that consumers need to make healthy food choices, including a line for added sugars, more prominent disclosure of calorie content, more accurate serving sizes, updated percent Daily Values (DVs), and new, required disclosures of nutrients of public health concern. The proposed delay would mean that the label would go 27 years without a major update for all affected products. Consumers should not have to wait an additional year and a half to have access to this important information.”

Prevention Institute

“We believe an updated Nutrition Facts label can support greater transparency and informed decision making for parents and families, facilitate stronger nutrition standards in foodservice establishments, and reflect the state of the evidence on the harmful impacts of added sugars.”

Public Health Institute

“Given the high and increasing rates of preventable diet-related diseases in America, the FDA must act quickly to require the new Nutrition Facts labels without the proposed delay. This policy will save lives, reduce preventable suffering and reduce massive Federal, state and family expenditures for preventable diet-related illness. There is no excuse for further delay.”

Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness

“...the FDA’s proposal to extend the manufacturer compliance date by 1.5 years is disappointing and does not put the health of the public first. Instead the delay makes it more difficult for families to make informed decisions, creates regulatory uncertainty, delays an important step in addressing America’s obesity epidemic, and preserves outdated and misleading labeling practices.”

Union of Concerned Scientists

“Standardized changes to the Nutrition Facts label requiring companies to document the amount of added sugar will help Americans access independent, reliable information necessary to make informed choices about the foods we buy and feed our families. It is the FDA’s

responsibility to enforce this science-based provision on time so that families can benefit from this critical tool starting in 2018 as intended, not as late as 2020.”

* All quotes were taken from comments submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in the Federal Register, Docket No. FDA-2012-N-1210, Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels. Available at <https://www.regulations.gov/docketBrowser?rpp=25&po=0&dct=PS&D=FDA-2012-N-1210&refD=FDA-2012-N-1210-0132>.