

Division of Dockets Management
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Room 1061, HFA-305
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Comments to Proposed Rulemaking; Docket No. FDA-2012-N-1210; Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels, 79 Federal Register 11880:

We write in support of the inclusion of an added sugars declaration in the proposed changes to the Nutrition Facts label.

As scientists, physicians, public health officials, and food and nutrition experts, we believe that the quantifying and labeling of added sugars in foods is an important step toward better health in the United States.

Studies increasingly point to the overconsumption of sugar in this country as a major contributing factor in rising health risks for metabolic syndrome, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lipid abnormalities, and hypertension. In 2012, the U.S. per capita daily sugar consumption was 82 grams—far more sugar consumption than recommended by the World Health Organization and the American Heart Association¹. More must be done to address our sugar overconsumption in order to improve the health of all Americans. This cannot be solved without public education. Many food and beverage manufacturers add excessive amounts of sugar to their products, including those that they market as healthy options. In our current food environment, many people are unknowingly and unavoidably consuming excess sugar. Given our soaring rates of chronic diseases and the link between sugar and these diseases, citizens have a right to know how much sugar has been added to their foods.

While we strongly urge the FDA to retain the added sugar declaration in the proposed label, adding an absolute number of added grams of sugar to the label means less to the consumer if there is no upper limit, as delineated by a percent daily value (%DV). As long as there is no upper limit on sugar consumption, the public will remain confused. While %DV usually refers to minimum thresholds, there is precedent for %DV referring to maxima as well. The United Kingdom instituted maxima on salt in the last decade, and has seen reductions in hypertension and stroke². The World Health Organization recommends at most 50 grams or 10% of total calories from added sugar, and the American Heart Association recommends an even more stringent limit of 25 g for women and 37.5g for men^{3,4}.

Food manufacturers can measure the sugar they add to food. The proposed rule provides flexibility in measurement accuracy and offers alternative methods for products where sugar

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. U.S. Consumption of Caloric Sweeteners. Online at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/sugar-and-sweeteners-yearbook-tables.aspx#U384BPldWCK>, accessed May 23, 2014.

² He, F.J.; S. Pombo-Rodrigues; G.A. MacGregor. 2014. Salt reduction in England from 2003 to 2011: Its relationship to blood pressure, stroke and ischaemic heart disease mortality. *BMJ Open*. April 14. Online at <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/4/4/e004549.abstract?sid=313bcb3b-3a0a-432b-a76e-3588a832d7b8>, accessed May 23, 2014.

³ Johnson, R. K.; L. J. Appel; M. Brands; B. V. Howard; M. Lefevre; R. H. Lustig; F. Sacks; L. M. Steffen; J. Wylie-Rosett. 2009. Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 120:1011-1020. Online at <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/120/11/1011.full.pdf>, accessed May 23, 2014.

⁴ World Health Organization. 2003. Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases. Geneva, Switzerland. Online at http://whqlibdoc.who.int/trs/who_trs_916.pdf, accessed April 20, 2014.

content is affected by fermentation. This is reasonable to ask of food manufacturers and the FDA should not delay in their implementation of the final rule. Moreover, proprietary information will be protected under the proposed rule; thus, manufacturers need not be concerned with confidentiality.

Voluntary labeling, such as Facts Up Front, can play a limited role in consumer education; however, such measures are insufficient as they are not uniformly implemented, can confuse consumers, and do not declare added sugars. Standardized changes to the Nutrition Facts label requiring the declaration of added sugars are necessary for consumer right to know. Added sugar labeling would help to counter advertising and misinformation^{5,6}. In 2012, the ten largest U.S. food and beverage companies spent more than \$6.9 billion in U.S. advertising to promote their high sugar megabrands⁷. Sugar-sweetened beverages, in particular are a major source of excess sugar for many Americans. These same companies spend more than \$1 billion dollars advertising their beverages alone.

We urge you to include a declaration of added sugar in your implementation of the proposed updates to the Nutrition Facts label, as well as attach a limit of 10% of daily calorie intake to it. Such a move would allow citizens to make more informed choices and help to promote health for all Americans.

Sincerely,

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⁵ Sugar-coating Science. 2014. Union of Concerned Scientists. Cambridge, MA. Online at www.ucsusa.org/sugarcoatingscience, accessed June 4, 2014.

⁶ Added Sugar, Subtracted Science. 2014. Union of Concerned Scientists. Cambridge, MA. Online at www.ucsusa.org/addedsugar.

⁷ Advertising Age. 2014. Data Center, Marketer Family Trees 2013 Update. Online at <http://adage.com/datacenter/marketerfamilytrees2013update/#62>, accessed March 25, 2014.

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