United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

DATE: May 19, 2015

MEMO CODE: SP 36 - 2015, CACFP 17 - 2015, SFSP 19 -2015

SUBJECT: Voluntary Menu Labeling in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published the final rule, *Nutrition Labeling of Standard Menu Items in Restaurants and Similar Retail Food Establishments* in the Federal Register (79 FR 71155) on December 1, 2014. This rule requires that calorie information be listed on menus and menu boards in chain restaurants, and similar retail food establishments with 20 or more locations to provide consumers with more nutritional information about the foods they eat outside of the home. The purpose of the FDA rule is to make nutrition information available to consumers in a direct and accessible manner to enable them to make informed and healthful dietary choices. The rule becomes effective December 1, 2015.

Under this new FDA regulation, restaurants and retail store operators must print a calorie statement on menus for all standard menu items. They also must make available, upon request, nutrition information for 11 nutrients for these menu items. The nutrients that must be made available include: total calories, calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugar, and protein.

Schools operating under the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program are specifically excluded by this new rule, as are institutions operating the Child and Adult Care Food Program and sponsors operating the Summer Food Service Program, and therefore are not required to implement these requirements. However, Child Nutrition Program operators may voluntarily implement similar initiatives.

Making nutrition information available to students and parents may help students make more informed choices about the foods they select and consume at school. Schools may already have much of this nutritional information on hand for reimbursable meals served at school and for a la carte Smart Snacks sold on campus in the form of standardized recipes, and food product labels. Schools may find that making some or all of this information available is fairly easy.

For more information about the FDA menu labeling regulation visit:
https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/01/2014-27833/food-labeling-nutrition-labeling-of-standard-menu-items-in-restaurants-and-similar-retail-food

Interested schools can refer to the following resources which may be helpful for developing and implementing a menu calorie labeling program:

Nutrient Analysis Protocols: How to Analyze Menus for USDA's School Meals Programs
http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/menu-planning/menu-planning-tools

National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference: http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/foods

USDA Supertracker Food-A-Pedia: http://www.supertracker.usda.gov

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to Program operators immediately. Program operators may direct questions to their State agency. State agencies may direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

Angela M. Kline
Director
Policy & Program Development Division
Child Nutrition Programs