



## Please support the Tennessee Healthful Menu Act (SB2314/HB2319) and oppose Menu Labeling Preemption (SB1092/HB950)

**What is menu labeling?** Menu labeling is when restaurants provide calorie information on menus and menu boards at point-of-purchase.

**Why is menu labeling important?** The average American eats out four times a week. Without nutrition information available, we often get more calories, fat, and salt than we realize. Eating more food (calories) than you need (the average adult should consume 2,000 calories each day) leads to weight gain. Just 100 excess calories a day amounts to ten pounds of weight gain in a year.

**Tennesseans, know your numbers!** The burden of obesity-related medical costs falls disproportionately on public programs (Medicare and Medicaid). *The cost of obesity in Tennessee* in 2003 was \$1.84 billion, with 50% covered by taxpayers (\$433 million by Medicare, and \$488 million by Medicaid). In addition to direct health care costs, obesity results in lower worker productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher workers' compensation claims than normal weight employees.

- Tennessee ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the US for adult diabetes (tied with Mississippi).
- Tennessee ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the US for obesity among 10-17 year olds.
- Tennessee ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the US for obesity among adults.
- Tennessee ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the US for adult physical **inactivity**.
- Tennessee ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the US for adult hypertension.

**Menu labeling does not take away our personal responsibility; it allows us to make informed choices.**

**Consumers have a right to information.** Companies are required to provide information on the fuel-efficiency of cars, what clothes are made of, care instructions for clothing, and energy and water consumption of certain home appliances. A menu labeling requirement at chain restaurants is even more compelling. People need nutrition information to manage their weight and reduce the risk of or manage heart disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure, which are leading causes of death, disability, and high health-care costs.

**Studies link eating out with obesity and higher caloric intakes.** Foods that people eat from restaurants are generally higher in calories and saturated fat and lower in nutrients, such as calcium and fiber, than home prepared foods. One order of cheese fries with ranch dressing contains 3,010 calories; a large movie theater popcorn with "butter" topping has over 1,600 calories, and a café mocha and pastry from Starbuck's provides over 1,000 calories. *Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant (770 calories) compared to a meal at home (420 calories).*

**Are other cities and states in the U.S. considering menu labeling?** Yes. More than twenty states and localities are considering policies that would require fast-food and other chain restaurants to provide calories and other nutrition information on menus and menu boards---four have already passed policies.

**Don't restaurants already provide this information?** Restaurants that provide nutrition information generally do so in ways that are not visible to customers when ordering, such as websites, tray liners, out-of-the-way signs or brochures.

**Experts recommend menu labeling.** Menu labeling is advocated by the National Academies' Institute of Medicine, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Cancer Institute, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, and the American Medical Association.

**We all have a stake in reducing the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases,** such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. While menu labeling alone will not solve the problem of obesity, it is considered a part of *best practices* in a comprehensive obesity prevention program, and will play a vital role in improving the health of Tennesseans. Please join us in supporting menu labeling in Tennessee!



**Allison Nutrition Counseling  
American Cancer Society  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
Children's Hospital Alliance  
Cumberland Pediatric Foundation  
Food Security Partners of Middle Tennessee  
Healthy Memphis Common Table  
Public Health Program, University of Memphis  
Rural Health Association of Tennessee  
Tennessee Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians  
Tennessee Hospital Association  
Tennessee Medical Association  
Tennessee Men's Health Network  
Tennessee Nurses Association  
Tennessee Obesity Taskforce  
Tennessee Primary Care Association  
Tennessee Public Health Association  
University of Memphis School of Public Health  
UT Center for Public Health, Knoxville  
Vanderbilt University Diabetes Center/Obesity Program  
Tennessee State Alliance of YMCA's**