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Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney:

As a health professional concerned about the public's health, I urge you to study and approve a petition concerning sugar labeling that was submitted to the FDA in August. That petition calls on the FDA to establish a "Daily Value" for refined/added sugars. The petition then asks that the FDA require the amount (in grams) of added sugars be declared on food labels and also expressed as a percentage of the Daily Value.

I am deeply concerned about the impact of diets high in refined sugars on health. While most past attention has focused on tooth decay, a much more important consideration is that sugary foods are likely to squeeze more nutritious foods out of the diet and reduce the overall nutrient density of the diet. Most obviously, soft drinks may replace milk, which is far more nutritious and important for prevention of osteoporosis. Indeed, 20 years ago, teenagers were consuming almost twice as much milk as soft drinks, but now they are consuming twice as much soft drinks as milk. Heavy consumption of soft drinks also may well contribute to obesity, the incidence of which has soared in the past two decades. Weight-loss counselors routinely advise overweight clients to reduce consumption of soft drinks and other empty-calorie foods.

Better labeling would help consumers recognize just how much added sugars are in processed foods. Currently, it is impossible to determine the added-sugars content in foods such as flavored yogurt and ice cream, which contain both natural and added sugars. (I am not concerned about consumption of natural sugars, in dairy products, fruit, and vegetables, because those sugars are usually accompanied by a variety of nutrients. Indeed, we should be consuming *more* of those foods.)

Quick approval of the sugars-labeling petition would make it easier for me and other health professionals to help consumers who are trying to consume a healthier diet.

Sincerely,

Zaida V. Lettierz  
Nutritionist

99P-2630

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Zaida V. Gutierrez  
6 Edmund Rd.  
Hollywood, Fl.  
33023



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U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville MD.

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