



*The Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council connects Philadelphians and their local government to create a more just food system. We envision that all Philadelphians can access and afford healthy, sustainable, culturally appropriate, local, and fair food.*

Testimony of Dwayne Wharton  
Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC)

Before the City Council Committee on Public Health & Human Services  
Hon. Cindy Bass, Chair

Bill No. 180001  
May 7, 2018

Good afternoon Chairwoman Bass, Councilwoman Reynolds Brown, and members of the Committee on Public Health and Human Services. My name is Dwayne Wharton and I am an appointed member of the Philadelphia Food Policy Council (FPAC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of FPAC in support of Bill No. 180001 which would amend the City of Philadelphia Health Code to require Sodium Safety Warning Labeling for Chain Restaurants.

FPAC's Food & Health Subcommittee advises the City on policies and practices that influence food and beverage choices with the aim of improving overall wellbeing and reducing health disparities for all Philadelphians. FPAC envisions that all Philadelphians can access and afford healthy, sustainable, culturally appropriate, local, and fair food. The widespread availability of high-sodium content meals at many chain restaurants is in direct conflict with that vision.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and in Philadelphia. Of the ten largest cities in the U.S., Philadelphia has the highest rates of hypertension and premature death. Countless studies have shown that excessive sodium is associated with elevated rates of hypertension, leading to an increased risk of stroke, heart disease, and premature mortality.<sup>1</sup> Almost every American consumes more sodium daily than guidelines recommend, and an estimated twenty-five percent of sodium intake comes from food served by restaurants.<sup>2</sup>

In 2017 Harvard University published results from a study that investigated fast food customers' knowledge regarding sodium intake. The study found that 90% of adults and 88% of adolescents underestimated sodium in their meals, with respondents underestimating sodium content more for meals with greater sodium content. The study concluded that education about sodium at point-of-purchase, such as sodium warning labels, may help correct consumer underestimation, particularly for meals with high sodium content.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/NutritionStandards\\_%20FinalJune2016.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/NutritionStandards_%20FinalJune2016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3780690/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3780690/>



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Consumer education is one way to inform the public about healthier options. Warning labels can help to reduce sodium intake, hypertension rates, and ultimately make our city healthier and save lives. We ask for your support in amending the City of Philadelphia Health Code to require Sodium Safety Warning Labeling for chain restaurants.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to take any questions.

Dwayne Wharton  
*FPAC Food & Health Subcommittee Chair*

Esteban Kelly  
*FPAC Co-Chair*

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