Background

- New York State Assembly Bill 2320-A (introduced January 15, 2015) would require health warning labels on certain beverages with added sugar.
- The goal is to educate the public and lower consumption of these unhealthy drinks, similar to the goal of having warning labels on cigarette packages.
- The legislation would require the warning on bottles, cans, vending machines, dispensers, and at all points of purchase. It would state:

  **SAFETY WARNING: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes and tooth decay.**

- The size of the warning label would be determined by the size of the container.
- Exempt beverages would include 100% fruit or vegetable juice with no added caloric sweeteners, dietary aids for people with medical conditions, infant formula, and any beverage whose principal ingredient by weight is milk.

Why should there be warning labels on sugar drinks in New York?

- Reducing the consumption of soda and other sugar drinks among children and adults is an important strategy for addressing obesity and preventing obesity-related diseases.
- Scientific evidence shows that consumption of sugar drinks promotes weight gain, diabetes, and tooth decay.\(^1\) Sugar in liquid (beverage) form is especially harmful because the body doesn’t compensate fully for beverage calories by reducing calorie intake later in the day.\(^2\)
- One in four adults in New York is obese, and one in ten has type 2 diabetes. Over the past two decades, the rate of obesity in the state has almost tripled, and the rate of diabetes has doubled.\(^3\) There are over 1.5 million people in New York living with diabetes today.\(^4\)
- In New York City, nearly a quarter (23.3%) of adults drinks at least one sugar drink per day. Consumption rates are nearly double in New York City's lowest-income communities compared to the highest-income communities (28.8% vs. 16.8%).\(^5\)
- Over 40% of New York City public high school students report drinking one or more sugar drinks daily. That proportion reaches nearly 50% among youth who attend school in one of New York City's high-need neighborhoods, like North and Central Brooklyn.\(^6\)
- One in three children in New York State between the ages of 2 and 17 years old consumes at least one sugar-sweetened soda or other beverage daily. Almost half of all children ages 12 to 17 years old consume at least one sugar drink per day.\(^7\)
- An extra soft drink a day increases a child’s risk of becoming obese by about 60%,\(^8\) and adults who drink one sugar drink or more per day are 27% more likely to be overweight or obese than non-drinkers, regardless of income or ethnicity.\(^9\)
- Soda consumption nearly doubles the risk of dental caries in children\(^10\) and increases the likelihood of cavities in adults,\(^11\) which can lead to pain, infection, and tooth loss.\(^12\)
Who supports warning labels?

Sugar-drink warning-label legislation was introduced by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) to the New York State Assembly in 2015. Cosponsoring the bill are Assembly members Mosley, Hikind, Jaffee, Simon, Joyner, Colton, Gottfried, Galef, Steck, Arroyo, and Linares, and multi-sponsors include Assembly members Brook-Krasny, Cook, Glick, and Perry. Supporters of the bill include:

- American Heart Association
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
- Foodstand
- Heart, Love & Soul Food Pantry & Dining Room
- New York State, American Academy of Pediatrics District II
- New York State Dental Association
- New York State Public Health Association
- Public Health Association of NYC
- Public Health Solutions
- Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity
- Thirty-five of the nation’s leading scientists and public health researchers:

  **Sharon R. Akabas, Ph.D.**
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  **Lawrence J. Appel, M.D., M.P.H.**
  Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

  **George A. Bray, M.D.**
  Louisiana State University

  **William H. Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.**
  George Washington University

  **Jared I. Fine, D.D.S., M.P.H.**
  Alameda County Public Health Commission

  **Michael I. Goran, Ph.D.**
  University of Southern California

  **Joan D. Guussow, M.Ed., Ed.D.**
  Teachers College
  Columbia University

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  **Vasanti Malik, Sc.D.**
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Harvard University

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Stanford Medical School

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References


4 Ibid.


6 New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Internal analysis based on the New York City Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2013.


12 Ibid.