

Federal Legislative Review

FDA Proposed Updates to Nutritional Labeling

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration have proposed to update the Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods to reflect the latest scientific information, including the link between diet and chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease. The proposed label also would replace out-of-date serving sizes to better align with how much people really eat, and it would feature a fresh design to highlight key parts of the label such as calories and serving sizes.

Key Elements:

- Require information about the amount of “added sugars” in a food product. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans states that intake of added sugar is too high in the U.S. population and should be reduced
- Update serving size requirements to reflect the amounts people currently eat. What and how much people eat and drink has changed since the serving sizes were first put in place in 1994
- Present “dual column” labels to indicate both “per serving” and “per package” calorie and nutrition information for larger packages
- Require the declaration of potassium and vitamin D, nutrients that some in the U.S. population are not getting enough of
- Revise the Daily Values for a variety of nutrients such as sodium, dietary fiber and Vitamin D
- “Calories from Fat” would be removed because research shows the type of fat is more important than the amount
- Refresh the format to emphasize certain elements, such as calories, serving sizes and Percent Daily Value

Senate Sets New Date for Minimum Wage Hearing:

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) has tentatively set March 12 as the new date for a hearing on issues relating to increasing the federal minimum wage. The HELP Committee was scheduled to hold a minimum wage hearing on February 13, but it was postponed due to a major snow storm that hit the nation’s capital. HELP Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is sponsoring a bill ([S. 1737](#)) that would hike the federal minimum wage from its current hourly rate of \$7.25 to \$10.10 through annual increments of 95 cents over a three-year period. After three years, S. 1737 calls for future minimum wage increases to be based on increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) announced he will delay Senate consideration of a minimum wage bill until some point following the March recess, which runs from March 14 to March 24. Reid acknowledged that some Senate Democrats may not support raising the minimum wage, but he intends to push for a vote while dismissing for the time being the possibility of compromising on a rate lower than \$10.10 as proposed by the Harkin legislation.

Bill to Raise ACA “Full-Time Employee” Definition Expected on House Floor in March:

In its March agenda listing, the House of Representatives plans to vote on [H.R. 2575](#) to amend the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) “Full-Time Employee” definition from 30-hours/week to 40-hours/week. Earlier this week, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) “[scored](#)” H.R. 2575 as increasing the cost of the ACA by \$73.7 billion spread over 10 years (2015-2024), \$63.4 billion from estimated lost revenue by a reduction in employer penalties. While H.R. 2575 currently has 208 co-sponsors, FMI and the “E-FLEX” Coalition have been meeting with both Republican and Democratic offices to broaden support for the bill, as well as address any questions/concerns with the CBO score.