An Online Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing Front-of-package Nutrient Labels on Consumer Understanding, Perceptions, and Behavior

PRESENTER: Brittany Lemmon
CO-AUTHORS: Anna H Grummon, Alejandra
Marquez, Lisa M Soederberg Miller, Lauren E
Au, Susan D Brown, Aijia Wang, Lisa M Powell,
Jennifer Falbe

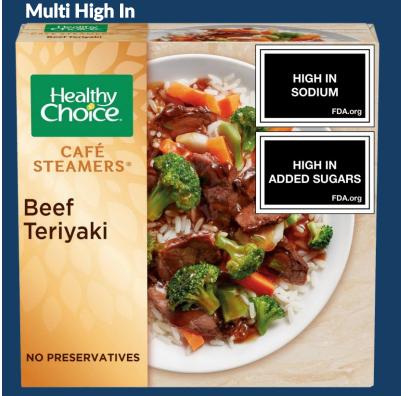
## **BACKGROUND**

- Packaged foods are the source of most added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat ("nutrients of concern")
- Overconsumption of nutrients of concern increases chronic disease risk
- Front-of-package labels (FOPLs) are a promising intervention to inform consumers and promote public health
- Unlike many other countries, the US does not have a mandatory FOPL
- In January 2025, FDA published a proposed rule for a mandatory FOPL
- There is a need to test FDA's label (Nutrition Info %DV) against other FOPL schemes (e.g., High In)

## **METHODS**

- Large online RCT with 5 conditions: No-label control and 4 FOPL schemes (center panel)
- Participants viewed real products
   labeled according to assigned scheme
- Outcomes: Consumer understanding of nutrient profiles and content, perceived healthfulness of unhealthy products, and food selections in a shopping task

# A Multi High In front-of-package label resulted in a high level of consumer understanding, helped consumers make quick assessments, and healthier food selections.



# Nutrition Info %DV (FDA's label)



# High In



# **Nutrition Info Red**



# **No-Label Control**



### RESULTS

- N=13,929 adults approximating US distributions of sex, education, race and ethnicity, and age
- All FOPL schemes substantially improved consumer understanding and behavior compared to control
- Nutrition Info Red and Multi High In outperformed Nutrition Info %DV in consumer understanding outcomes
- Nutrition Info Red tended to have higher perceived healthfulness of unhealthy products relative to control and other schemes
- Multi High In significantly reduced the risk of participants selecting a high-in food for themselves in a shopping task
- Multi High In produced the fastest response times, while Nutrition Info
   %DV resulted in the slowest

### **TAKEAWAY**

The FDA's label tended to underperform and, based on these results, a **Multi High In** scheme, which is already implemented in many Latin American countries, should be **considered in the design of a** mandatory FOPL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This research was jointly supported by Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and grant 2020–85774 from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Food Policy Program (www.bloomberg.org). S.D. Brown also received support from National Institutes of Health grants K26 DK138246 and P30 DK092924.