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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## *California Leads Nation with Passage of Menu Labeling Law*

**SACRAMENTO, CA, September 30, 2008...** California became the first state in the nation to require nutritional menu labeling, following Governor Schwarzenegger's signature of SB 1420 (Padilla) this morning. The landmark legislation requires some 17,000 California chain and fast-food restaurants to post calorie counts on menus and menu boards, part of an effort to address the state's growing obesity epidemic.

"This is a huge victory for Californians working to make healthier decisions when they eat out," declared SB 1420 co-sponsor Dr. Harold Goldstein of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. "The days of chain restaurants marketing a calorie-laden sandwich as "lite, guiltless or healthy" are over in California. When Californians walk into a chain or fast-food restaurant, the calorie information they need to make healthier decisions will be right in front of them."

The bill provides for a two-year phase-in period – with brochures containing nutritional information (the number of calories, grams of saturated fat, grams of carbohydrates and milligrams of sodium) required at the point of sale and drive-throughs beginning July 1, 2009, and posting of calorie information on menus and indoor menu boards beginning January 1, 2011. Any restaurant with 20 or more locations in California will be affected.

Senator Alex Padilla (D-Los Angeles) authored the bill with Senator Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) and Assembly Members Marc DeSaulnier (D-Concord) and Mark Leno (D-San Francisco). The bill is sponsored by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy and the American Cancer Society.

With the success of the California menu labeling law, similar statutes are expected throughout the United States. New York City has already implemented menu labeling, and a handful of localities have passed similar measures (including San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties). Sixteen other states are considering similar legislation.

“Menu labeling is good common sense,” says Goldstein. “Just like smoke-free restaurants, I expect menu labeling will quickly sweep the nation as other states recognize the benefit of providing consumers with basic nutrition information. Menu labeling by itself won’t end the obesity epidemic, but it’s sure a good place to start.”

The challenge to understand chain restaurant menus was highlighted last year, when a statewide Field Research Corporation poll was released showing that only 10 percent of Californians could pick the healthiest item from a short list of common fast foods. That same poll indicated that 84 percent of Californians support the concept of posting nutritional information in chain restaurants. Restaurants and fast-food outlets are a key concern because Americans consume about one-third of their calories and half of their food dollars at these establishments.

CCPHA is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization leading efforts in California to understand and address the state’s growing obesity crisis. For more information on this legislation, visit the CCPHA site at: [www.publichealthadvocacy.org](http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org).