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**17th U.S. Surgeon General Applauds First Lady and FDA Efforts to Improve Nutrition Labeling for Consumers**

*Updated labeling will provide better access to information, improve health literacy among Americans.*

**TUCSON, AZ (February 27, 2014)** – 17th Surgeon General of the United States, President of the non-profit Canyon Ranch Institute, and Distinguished Professor for the University of Arizona and The Ohio State University Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, applauded First Lady Michelle Obama and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in their efforts to improve how nutritional information is provided to consumers. The Obama Administration unveiled new guidelines today for the nutritional facts labeling on packaged foods and beverages.

“Millions of Americans are at greater risk of disease and early death because of carrying excess weight. Anything we can do to support better nutritional information and health literacy for people across our nation, the better it is for our nation’s public health,” Dr. Carmona said. “I applaud the First Lady in her continued leadership of the Let’s Move Campaign and in educating all Americans, especially children, about the importance of healthy eating and being physically active. I also support the FDA’s effort to provide better access to nutritional information so consumers can make smart choices.”

The new labels provide consumers with information such as the total amount of calories (not just from fat as current labels do), Vitamin D, potassium, and added sugars in a particular food, based on an updated portion size more in line with what a person would typically eat.

Improving America’s health literacy was a pillar of Dr. Carmona’s term as U.S. Surgeon General and continues to be a primary focus of his work since leaving the office.

Canyon Ranch Institute also suggests the FDA and First Lady could advocate for further improvements to the nutrition facts label. For instance, the label does not indicate which ingredients are healthy or not healthy, something that could easily be accomplished by color-coding. Additionally, the label continues to use scientific terms instead of words people know and use on a daily basis – for example the labels still refer to “sodium” instead of “salt.”

“The changes suggested by the FDA are a move in the right direction,” Dr. Carmona said, “but there is more to be done to help improve the health literacy of all Americans.”

**About Canyon Ranch Institute®**

Canyon Ranch Institute catalyzes the possibility of optimal health for all people by translating the best practices of Canyon Ranch and our partners to help educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. Canyon Ranch Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit public charity. More information is available at [www.canyonranchinstitute.org](http://www.canyonranchinstitute.org) . On Twitter [@CRIhealthyworld](https://twitter.com/CRIhealthyworld)