

NYC court hears appeal against salt-warning fines

November 30 2016, by Alina Heineke

An appeals court has heard arguments on New York City's first-of-its-kind rule that requires chain restaurants to use menu icons to warn patrons of salty foods.

The regulation mandates that chain restaurants put a salt-shaker icon on menu items that exceed the recommended daily limit of 2,300 milligrams of sodium, about a teaspoon.

The National Restaurant Association contends the salt warning "will confuse and mislead consumers" and that it oversteps the city Board of Health's authority. The suit also brands the salt warning "nonsensical" in applying to only some food vendors and argues it violates restaurateurs' free speech rights by forcing them to post a warning they dispute as based on "scientifically controversial opinion."

The city Law Department said Wednesday it's confident the [health](#) board had the proper authority.

The association has been embroiled in a legal fight with the city since December 2015 when the rule took effect. A court decision in May allowed the city board of health to issue the fines of up to \$600 while the litigation saga plays out.

The regulation applies to chains with at least 15 locations nationwide, which health officials estimate account for about one-third of the city's restaurant business.

New York City Health Commissioner Mary Bassett said Wednesday that since June, 1,500 restaurants have been inspected and 455 received violation notices.

Bassett also said that the [city](#) health board was preparing to launch in the coming months a public awareness campaign intended to educate restaurant patrons on how to use the warning icons.

The health commissioner said there hasn't been much resistance to the salt-shaker rule because "many restaurants understand that their patrons want to know what's in their food."

New York has been slapped with lawsuits over other healthy-eating initiatives it tried to advance. Courts ruled against former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's campaign to impose a size limit on sugary drinks but approved a requirement for chain eateries to post calorie counts on menus.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: NYC court hears appeal against salt-warning fines (2016, November 30) retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-11-nyc-court-appeal-salt-warning-fines.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--