

Approval of amendments to the General Health Law concerning front labeling of food and non-alcoholic beverages

29 July 2019

On July 24, 2019, the Health Commission of the Chamber of Deputies approved the draft opinion that amends and adds various provisions to the General Health Law concerning overweight, obesity, and front labeling of food and non-alcoholic beverages.

The approved amendments to the General Health Law have, as its main purpose, the right to health protection, as well as the constitutional interest of providing individuals and society with an adequate state of health.

Particularly, the amendments approved by the Health Commission regarding the front labelling of food and non-alcoholic beverages are mainly focused on the following aspects:

1. Front labelling warnings shall be included separately and independently from the declaration of ingredients and nutritional information; The front labelling warnings shall indicate whether the product exceeds the maximum limits for energy content, added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and other critical nutrients and ingredients established by the relevant regulatory provisions;
2. Critical nutrients shall be declared. Critical nutrients are those components of a diet which may be a risk factor for chronic non-communicable diseases. These critical nutrients will be determined by the Ministry of Health;
3. The Ministry of Health is empowered to order the inclusion of legends or pictograms when deemed necessary;
4. It is expressly provided that the Ministry of Health shall consider the international treaties and conventions “on labelling,” of which Mexico is a party, in order to determine the requirements with which food and non-alcoholic beverages labeling must comply;
5. Labels or back labels must include nutritional information that is easy to understand, truthful, direct, simple, and visible.

Amendments to the General Health Law, approved by the Health Commission, must be submitted to the Plenary of the Chamber of Deputies to continue with its legislative process, and if necessary, be published in the Federal Official Gazette.

As consequence of the entry into force of the amendments and additions to the General Health Law, the draft opinion establishes that the national executive power will have 180 days to make the corresponding regulatory adjustments.

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