RESOLUTION TO IMPROVE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES BY IMPLEMENTING A TRAFFIC LIGHT FOOD LABELING POLICY

WHEREAS, obesity continues to rise in the United States and is a leading cause of preventable death in Idaho, with 35% of adults being obese and 68.5% either overweight or obese1,2; and

WHEREAS, the USDA’s 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting intakes of saturated fat, sodium, trans fat, cholesterol, and added sugars to manage and prevent obesity3; and

WHEREAS, energy dense, nutrient deficient foods are vigorously marketed4,5; and

WHEREAS, current food labels are often misunderstood and misused, particularly in the low-income, literacy, and numeracy households with as little as 10.5% of college students being able to use them correctly6,7,8; and

WHEREAS, labels that are readily accessible and easy-to-understand best support healthy dietary decisions9,10; and

WHEREAS, traffic light labels quickly reflect the overall healthfulness of an item and how frequently it should be consumed11; and

WHEREAS, the use of traffic light labels increase the purchasing of healthier items by 10%, while decreasing purchases of less healthy by 16.5% 12,13; and

WHEREAS, food labeling policy changes can be more cost effective than other obesity treatments14; and

WHEREAS, changes to environment and public policy can affect healthy choices in overall populations15,16; and

WHEREAS, the State of Idaho does not have a policy regarding promotion of healthy food choices using easy-to-understand food labels.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho Association of Local Boards of Health supports and promotes healthy food choices by enacting a traffic light food labeling policy.

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