

Count Your Calories and Post on the Café Menu

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The posting of nutrition information on restaurant menus, including corporate and campus dining centers, will soon be the law of the land, as part of the new health care reform bill.

The law covers all operators with 20 or more locations, which includes nearly all food service contractors.

Calorie counts must be placed “adjacent to the name of the standard menu item,” the law says. The U.S. Dept. Of Health and Human Services will determine whether additional information will be required.

Operators also must make written data about dishes’ nutritional content available to diners on request. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is empowered to determine whether the information was developed “on a reasonable basis.”

The disclosure requirement does not apply to daily specials or items that will be offered for less than 60 days.

The date for compliance with the new law is not yet established, but now is a good time to start planning, says Anita Jones-Mueller, president of Healthy Dining, a firm that works with the National Restaurant Assn. on nutrition initiatives.

“Computerized or database analysis usually is the most cost effective and flexible method,” she advises.

*Clarion’s new **Fresh & Natural** program makes it easy to establish a healthful and sustainable dining service program that conforms to the new Health Care Law’s requirements.*