



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: All Media

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Local Restaurants Join Nutrition Campaign

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"FINDING THE HEALTHIEST FOOD IN TOWN JUST GOT EASIER"

Local Restaurants in 6 Counties Get Menu Make-overs
and Nutrition Breakdowns on Signature Dishes

More than 50 local restaurants spanning six central Michigan counties have joined with the Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) to make healthier options more obvious to their customers. Through the CMDHD's Small Communities Transformation Grant, locally-owned businesses in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon counties are currently examining their own menus and making the nutritional information within some of their signature dishes more easily seen and understood by their hungry customers.

The initiative has CMDHD working with the Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH), a state-wide agency which represents Michigan's 45 local health departments. The goal of the project will involve analyzing some of the recipes currently available on the popular restaurants' menus and determining their total calories, fats, and sodium content. The result will be an easy to read summary of the recipe's nutritional values that allow customers to make more informed choices about what they are eating.

"This type of information is really important to a lot of our customers who have some dietary concerns," says Kent Roth, owner of the Shepherd Bar, one of the eateries taking part in the initiative. "They might have high blood pressure or diabetes and so forth, and they need to know what's in the food so they can be aware of it. And that's great with us. That's what we want, too. We want our customers to get a good meal and know it's nutritious for them and for their kids. These new menus will put it all right in front of them."

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News of this menu-labelling project, which began in March of 2012, comes right on the heels of the new Food and Drug Administration's food label announcement, and the CMDHD could not be happier with the timing. "With the new FDA guidelines for food labels coming out, a greater awareness of what's in the foods we all eat will be getting a lot of attention," states Heather Cole, Supervisor for the CMDHD. "Being able to bring that kind of attention and information to our local populations is exactly what the Health Department is trying to do."

The new FDA guidelines are the first changes in two decades to the familiar black-and-white nutrition boxes posted on the side of almost all the packaged foods available in our grocery aisles, and will now put calorie counts in larger, bolder type. They are also adjusting portion sizes to reflect how much Americans actually eat, such as a 20-oz. soda now being labelled as one portion, rather than as two-and-a-half servings as it currently had been. In much the same way, the new menus will include similar nutritional and caloric information. This information has been painstakingly researched by nearly 40 dietetic students from Central Michigan University, who will also offer suggestions on how to make certain hometown favorites even healthier.

Of the 53 local restaurants involved in the initiative, several have already signed agreements with the CMDHD to proceed with the new menus. They include the following listed by county. **Arenac:** Ali's Up North, White's Beach Tavern, and Wheeler's Restaurant; **Clare:** Buccilli's Pizza, S & R Diner, and the Mid Michigan Community College; **Gladwin:** the River Walk Grill; **Isabella:** The Shepherd Bar and Grill, O'Kelly's, The Cabin, Freddie's Tavern, and Max and Emily's Bakery; **Osceola:** Mr. Pibb's; and in **Roscommon:** Joe's Coney Island and Shenanigans. Agreements from the remaining 39 restaurants are expected this month.

This article was made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for CMDHD's Together We Can Transform Communities Initiative. 100% of the \$1,643,798 Together We Can Transform Communities Initiative fund is financed with Federal funds.

If you would like an opportunity to get involved in preventing obesity or in improving nutrition, consider joining Together We Can. Together We Can is a community project aimed at improving health status in the central Michigan area. For more information LIKE Together We Can Health Improvement Council on Facebook, visit our website at www.together-we-can.org or email us at TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.org.

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This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

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