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**NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES-**

Number: 15-102a

RESOLUTION

SUBJECT: Sodium in the U.S. Food Supply

INTRODUCED BY: Commission on Environmental Health

ADOPTED: August 5, 2015

WHEREAS, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day, and made the further recommendation that individuals who are 51 years and older and those of any age, including children, who are African American or have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should limit intake to 1,500 mg of sodium per day;ⁱ and,

WHEREAS, the average daily sodium intake (mostly from salt) for Americans age 2 years and older is more than 3,400 mg;ⁱⁱ and,

WHEREAS, almost 80 percent of the sodium in the average American's diet comes from processed and restaurant foods, meaning that sodium intake is largely out of the consumer's control;ⁱⁱⁱ and,

WHEREAS, research shows a strong dose-dependent relationship between consuming increasing sodium levels and higher blood pressure in most people.^{iv} However, when salt intake is reduced, blood pressure begins decreasing within weeks on average;^v and,

WHEREAS, about 70 million American adults (29 percent) have high blood pressure—that's 1 in every 3 American adults, and anyone, including children, can develop elevated or high blood pressure;^{vi} and,

WHEREAS, hypertension greatly increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States;^{vii} and,

WHEREAS, about 90 percent of Americans will eventually develop hypertension;^{viii} and,

WHEREAS, compared to the general population, the prevalence of hypertension is nearly 26 and 40 percent greater among African American men and women, respectively, and prevalence of stroke is 60 percent greater;^{ix} and

WHEREAS, U.S. costs associated with high blood pressure including health care services, medications, and missed days of work totaled \$46 billion in 2011,^x and,

WHEREAS, researchers estimate that reducing current sodium consumption rates by 1,200 mg a day would prevent 60,000 to 120,000 cases of coronary heart disease and save 44,000 to 92,000 lives per year;^{xi} and,

WHEREAS, such a decrease in sodium consumption also would reduce national health care costs by an estimated \$10 billion to \$24 billion annually;^{xii}

THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the National Medical Association supports continued recommendations in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans for federal government public health policies to reduce sodium in the food supply; and,

RESOLVED, that the National Medical Association specifically supports action by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to reduce sodium in the food supply; and,

RESOLVED, that the National Medical Association continues to educate our members, policymakers, and other people of color organizations about the need for population-based measures to reduce sodium in the food supply.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

References

ⁱ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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^{iv} Institute of Medicine. (2004). *Dietary reference intakes for water, potassium, sodium chloride, and sulfate*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

^v He, F. J., & MacGregor, G. A. (2004). Effect of longer-term modest salt reduction on blood pressure. *The Cochrane Library*.

^{vi} Nwankwo, T., Yoon, S. S., Burt, V., & Gu, Q. (2013). Hypertension among adults in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2011-2012. *NCHS data brief*, (133), 1-8.

^{vii} CDC. (2015). High Blood Pressure Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/faqs.htm>.

^{viii} Vasan, R. S., Beiser, A., Seshadri, S., Larson, M. G., Kannel, W. B., D'Agostino, R. B., & Levy, D. (2002). Residual lifetime risk for developing hypertension in middle-aged women and men: The Framingham Heart Study. *Jama*, 287(8), 1003-1010.

^{ix} National Center for Health Statistics. (2014). *Health, United States, 2013, With Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans, With Special Feature on Prescription Drugs*. Tables 44, 65.

^x Mozaffarian, D., Benjamin, E. J., Go, A. S., Arnett, D. K., Blaha, M. J., Cushman, M., et al. (2015). Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2015 Update A Report From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*, 131(4), e29-e322.

^{xi} Bibbins-Domingo, K., Chertow, G. M., Coxson, P. G., Moran, A., Lightwood, J. M., Pletcher, M. J., & Goldman, L. (2010). Projected effect of dietary salt reductions on future cardiovascular disease. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 362(7), 590-599.

^{xii} Ibid.