Sodium Warnings Memo Template

To: [Recipient(s)]
From: [Your Name/Organization]
Date: [Insert Date]
Re: A5207A–Sodium Warning Icons on Restaurant Menus

Supporting Healthier Choices for New Yorkers: Sodium Warning Policy (A5207A)

Across New York, families are doing their best to make healthy choices, but too often they are navigating a food environment that does not give them the information they need. When people walk into a restaurant or order food online, they are making decisions that affect their health and their families' well-being, yet they are often doing so without clear, accessible information about what is in their food.

A5207A is a practical, common-sense policy that helps address this gap by requiring chain restaurants to display a clear warning icon next to menu items that exceed the daily recommended limit for sodium. The goal is not to take choices away, but to make sure those choices are informed and transparent.

Diet-related diseases continue to impact communities across the state, especially in neighborhoods that have long faced barriers to healthy food access and care. High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke are not abstract issues. They are affecting parents, grandparents, and young people every day. At the same time, many restaurant meals contain extremely high levels of sodium, sometimes more than a full day's recommended amount in a single item, and that information is often difficult to find or understand.

This policy meets people where they are. It provides simple, visible information at the moment a decision is being made, without requiring extra time, research, or specialized knowledge. It is designed to be accessible to everyone, including people with limited time, varying levels of health literacy, or language barriers. By making this information clearer, the policy helps people make choices that align with their health needs and values.

There is strong evidence that warning icons increase awareness and lead to healthier choices. They also encourage restaurants to improve their offerings over time. New York City has already implemented a similar policy, showing that this approach is both feasible and effective in real-world settings.

This is also an equity issue. Communities that are disproportionately impacted by diet-related diseases often face the greatest barriers to clear and accessible nutrition

information. Providing simple, visible warnings helps close that gap and supports more equitable access to health.

We urge Governor Hochul to sign A5207A into law immediately. New Yorkers should not have to conduct their own research to know when a single restaurant meal contains an excessive amount of sodium. A clear warning at the point of purchase is a simple, effective way to give people information they can immediately use.

At its core, this policy is about respect for people's right to know what is in their food and to make informed decisions for themselves and their families. Supporting A5207A is a meaningful step toward a food environment that better supports the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.