

**City Council
Committee on Health
Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams
Monday, February 25, 2019**

Thank you Chair Levine and the City Council Committee on Health for the opportunity to submit written testimony on a series of measures that would improve the health outcomes of our constituents through improved health education and agency transparency.

I support the committee's work on increasing transparency in labeling, creating measures to further inform the public about the health risks of added sugar in restaurant foods, and trying to reduce children's consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks. These are all important initiatives to help the public understand what is in the food and drinks that they consume, why reduction of added sugars is important, and how everyday choices affect people with diabetes or prediabetes. I stand with each of you in your work to make New York City residents healthier and more well-informed about their nutrition choices. I thank you for your partnership, as I have worked to advance a forward leaning public health agenda in Brooklyn and beyond.

As many of you know, I was diagnosed about three years ago with Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes was said to run in my family. I consulted some of the best doctors across the city and they told me that I would live with the condition for the rest of my life. This did not sit well with me and I began studying the medical literature on reversing Type 2 diabetes and I learned about the power of a whole-food, plant-based diet. Within months, my diabetes was no longer diagnosable; I was able to reverse my disease with a diet of fruits, legumes, nuts, seeds, and vegetables. My diet excludes added sugars and animal products.

I support Intro 1361, the bill requiring the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to report twice a year on the rate of diabetes-related health problems including the number of lower-limb amputations, diabetes related blindness, dialysis rates, diabetes-related depression, and anxiety rates, the number of cases of End Stage Renal Disease, and updates from the New York A1C Registry. This bill would also require DOHMH to compile a comprehensive report by 2020 and submit recommendations and a plan to reduce the occurrence of diabetes-related health problems.

It is important that these recommendations and plan include diet as a key tool to mitigate diabetes-related health problems. From my story to the stories of many of my constituents who have approached me once hearing about my journey, we know that diet plays an important role in disease reversal. If we want to take diabetes reduction seriously, we must look at what plant-based nutrition can do and how we can go beyond diabetes management and move more toward cases of diabetes reversal, as well as prevention.

Furthermore, I look forward to working with this committee as it seeks to tackle the issue of added sugars, but the story does not end with added sugar. A significant body of peer-reviewed scientific literature demonstrates that reducing or eliminating added sugar is a step along the way to additional dietary changes that entail reducing consumption of foods laden with cholesterol and saturated fat, especially animal products such as dairy, beef, chicken, eggs, and turkey, which are the primary sources of cholesterol and fat in the standard American diet.

Let us work together to do this and then continue to do more in the nutrition space in the future. Sugar is just one chapter among many in the story of helping New Yorkers be healthier and better informed.