

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Commissioner
210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Ingrid Antonio (t) 443-984-2623

Email: Ingrid.Antonio@baltimorecity.gov

Reduce Unhealthy Trans Fats, Hon!

(Baltimore, MD April 4, 2007) -- At Phillips Seafood Restaurant in Baltimore's Inner Harbor at 11:30 am today, representatives of two of Baltimore's leading restaurants are joining Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein in urging a reduction in unhealthy trans fats. Dr. Sharfstein is also writing every food establishment in the city with specific guidance on how to accomplish this important goal.

Most trans fats are artificial fats that are created when manufacturers add hydrogen to vegetable oil. Trans fats both elevate LDL ("bad") cholesterol that causes heart disease and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol that works to clear arteries. Studies have indicated that trans fats are responsible for as many as 30,000 premature deaths in the United States each year.

"By taking a few simple steps, food facilities can curb their use of unhealthy trans fats without compromising the taste or quality of the food," said Dr. Sharfstein. "This is an important step to improve nutrition and health in Baltimore."

Phillips Seafood Restaurant has recently switched to trans fat-free frying oils for its famous crab cakes and other menu items.

"The switch to trans fat-free frying oils will result in improved nutrition values for some of our most popular menu items such as Ocean City Crab Cakes, Golden Fried Shrimp, and Fried Seafood Platters," Phillips Seafood Chief Operating Officer, John Knorr stated.

Another popular Baltimore restaurant is also helping the Health Department get the word out.

"For 15 years we have been using soybean oil for our hand cuts fries and fried fish. Soybean oil has no trans fats. For our homemade dill vinaigrette we are using a 10% olive and soybean blend, also no trans fats," said Denise Whiting, owner of Café Hon in Hampden.

Ms. Whiting added: "After not eating right, I often notice a very uncomfortable feeling in my stomach. However, when you eat good HON, you feel good."

"I am pleased that the Health Department is getting the word out on trans fats," said Mayor Sheila Dixon. "This is another step towards a healthier Baltimore."

The Health Department is sending a letter with educational materials and specific recommendations to all city food facilities urging them to reduce trans fats content. The Department will conduct a follow-up survey in several months to identify steps taken to reduce trans fats.

For more information and advice on trans fat oils go to www.Baltimorehealth.org or www.AskInspectorO.org

###