

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Health Department Announces Charm City Health Awards**

**BALTIMORE, MD (January 7, 2009)** — The Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to introduce its food facility recognition awards - the Charm City Health Award for Excellence in Sanitation and Charm City Health Award for Nutritional Information. These awards will be distributed to food facilities that go above and beyond the minimum food safety and sanitation required by the State and City.

Under the Health Department's food facility recognition program, restaurants will earn a Charm City Health Award for Excellence in Sanitation for a solid record of sanitation and hygiene. Restaurants will earn a Charm City Health Award for Nutritional Information for providing important nutritional information. Restaurants will be able to apply for both awards starting January 7, 2009.

"I am excited that the City will begin recognizing those food establishments that hold food safety and protection as a top priority and want to assist the public in making healthier eating choices," said Olivia Farrow, assistant commissioner, Division of Environmental Health. "The award decals that will be placed on doors or windows of a restaurant will give the public immediate notification that they are choosing an establishment that has taken extra steps to ensure food safety and/or good nutritional choices for their customers."

The comment period for the proposed program was May 14, 2008 until July 1, 2009. The final draft of the program integrates comments and recommendations from the Restaurant Association of Maryland and the general public. For example, commentors uniformly rejected the Health Department's original proposal of naming the awards after the local crustacean.

The Food Facility Recognition Program can be found online at <http://www.baltimorehealth.org>.

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