



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published April 6th, 2016

New Signs Will Encourage Lamorinda Eateries to Be Healthy

By Nick Marnell

Lamorindans will soon be able to tell the health and food safety record of their favorite eating establishment just by looking in the window.

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors last month adopted an ordinance requiring food purveyors to post a color-coded placard informing the public about violations discovered during their most recent health inspection. The program will be phased in starting with regular inspections after April 15.

"The placards are another great resource for our residents who want to make informed decisions about where they eat," Board Chair Candace Andersen said. "With the placards prominently posted, they will be able to instantly tell whether there have recently been any health code violations."

A green placard means zero or one major violation, yellow means two or more and red will be posted if

a business is shut down because of an imminent health hazard. Major violations include food measured at unsafe temperatures, a sick employee handling food, or equipment that is unclean or not properly sanitized. Any of the problems discovered by a Contra Costa Environmental Health inspector must be corrected on the spot.

Tampering with or removal of the placards, which can be posted only by Environmental Health inspectors, may result in the business losing its operator's permit.

"Our primary goal is to reduce food-borne illness," Environmental Health Director Dr. Marilyn Underwood said in a statement. "Making inspection results highly visible appears to have an impact on making businesses that sell food operate more safely."

"It'll certainly keep everyone on their toes," said Pat Vahey of Peninni's Pizza and Pasta in Moraga. "I'm not that concerned about it. If you keep a clean shop, you won't have anything to worry about."

For one Lamorinda chain restaurant, Denver-based Chipotle Mexican Grill, a green placard likely cannot be posted quickly enough. Customers across the country have recently contracted food-borne illnesses from eating at Chipotle, and to ensure better food safety, the restaurant announced it will process more of its ingredients through centralized kitchens. Neither Chipotle area manager Anthony Thomas nor director of public relations Chris Arnold chose to comment on the placard program.

Contra Costa Health Services maintains a searchable database of county health inspection results through its free Food Inspector app, downloadable for Google Android and Apple iOS operating systems.

Reach the reporter at: nick@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA