June 1, 2023

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos
Minister of Health, Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Honourable Minister Duclos:

Re: Support for BILL S-254 An Act to Amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages)

Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) Board of Health made a motion on May 12, 2023 to endorse Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit’s (SMDHU) letter to you dated March 15, 2023 (attached), titled Support for "BILL S-254 An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages)".

The letter from SMDHU outlines how Bill S-254 aligns with Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health, including recommendations for mandatory labelling of all alcoholic beverages with the number of standard drinks in a container, risk levels from Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health, and health warnings.

Despite being widely socially accepted, alcohol consumption is a complex public health issue that has social, health, and economic impacts on our local communities. Evidence shows that alcohol is a risk factor for numerous chronic diseases, including cancers, as well as injuries and violence. Alcohol consumption in Huron Perth is an ongoing concern. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, in 2015 to 2020, 21.6% of adults in Huron Perth ages 19 years and older reported drinking at a high-risk level (7+ drinks) in the past week. This was significantly higher than the comparable provincial average of 16.3%. The letter from SMDHU encompasses recommendations that are applicable and beneficial to communities and residents within Huron and Perth counties.

HPPH Board of Health remains committed to working collaboratively with other public health units, non-governmental organizations, health care agencies, and out municipal, provincial, and federal governments to reduce the burden of alcohol on our communities and prevent alcohol-related harms.

The HPPH Board of Health urges support for amending Bill S-254 to implement health warning labels on alcoholic beverages.
Sincerely,

Bernie MacLellan, Board Chair
Huron Perth Public Health

BM/ikl

cc. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions (carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca)
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Ontario (cmoh@ontario.ca)
Senator Patrick Brazeau (patrick.brazeau@sen.parl.gc.ca)
Senator Donald Plett (don.plett@sen.parl.gc.ca)
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