Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

Re: Alcohol Health Warning Labels

On March 3, 2023, at a regular meeting of the Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit, the Board received a report titled Update to Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health.

The report outlined the following:

- Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) catchment area has the highest rates in the province for ER visits and hospitalizations attributable to alcohol:
  - ER visits due to alcohol: NWHU rate of 7,486.6 per 100,000 in 2021, 13 times as high as the provincial rate of 543.3 per 100,000
  - Hospitalization due to alcohol: 1,498.9 per 100,000, 7 times as high as the provincial rate of 210.9 per 100,000
- NWHU Self-report data from 2019/20 also reveals higher heavy drinking rates than the province:
  - Proportion of people reporting heavy drinking in the NWHU is 20.2%, statistically higher than the province (15.6%). This rate has decreased from the 25.5% reported in 2015/16.

Considering the health harms associated with alcohol and the benefits of alcohol health warning labels, the Board of Health passed the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) Board of Health call on the Government of Canada to amend the Food and Drug Act to make mandatory that all alcohol beverage containers have enhanced alcohol labels affixed:

1. Indicating what constitutes a standard drink;
2. Illustrating the number of standard drinks in the beverage container; and
3. Displaying health messages regarding adverse health outcomes, including the cancer risks associated with the consumption of alcohol.

AND FURTHER THAT the Northwestern Health Unit Board of Health endorse, in principle, Bill S254 – An Act to Amend the Food and Drug Act (Warning Labels on
Alcoholic Beverages) and Motion M-61 A National Warning Label Strategy for Alcoholic Products.

The Northwestern Health Unit fully supports the above recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Douglas Lawrance
Chair, Board of Health, Northwestern Health Unit

Copy to:
- Hon. Eric Melillo, Member of Parliament, Kenora
- Hon. Marcus Powlowski, Member of Parliament, Thunder Bay - Rainy River
- Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health
- Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
- Hon. Greg Rickford, Member of Provincial Parliament, Kenora - Rainy River
- Hon. Sol Mamakwa, Member of Provincial Parliament, Kiiwetinoong
- Hon. Kevin Holland, Member of Provincial Parliament, Thunder Bay - Atikokan
- Dr. Kieran Moore, CMOH
- Chair of the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health
- Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- Ontario Boards of Health
- Canadian Public Health Association
- Rainy River District Ontario Health Team
- All Nations Health Partners Ontario Health Team
- Kiiwetinoong Healing Waters Ontario Health Team