



Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control

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Statement on the Amendments to the Tobacco Control Regulations (2013)

The Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control is disappointed with some of the amendments that were made to the Tobacco Control (2013) Regulations as tabled in Parliament on Tuesday January 25. The regulations as initially drafted were in line with international best practices and were the result of evidence based research. Similar legislation is in place in several countries and follows excellent guidelines from the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the world's first public health treaty.

We note that the Graphic Health Warnings (GHW) have been reduced from 75% to 60%. This is most unfortunate. Research has shown that "bigger is better" - larger warnings deter non-smokers from starting to smoke; and encourage smokers to quit. It is due to the effectiveness of the larger GHW that those with vested interests want the size to be reduced.

In relation to smoking in the home, while we appreciate that the enforcement of banning smoking in the homes in the presence of household helpers presents some challenges, we hope that employers who smoke will realise the harm that they will inflict on this category of worker if they choose to smoke in their presence; and recognise that a household workers' life is not of any less a value than that of other categories of workers.

We note the change from GHW being required on single sticks of cigarettes to that of text. In making this change the revised regulations state that Graphic Health Warnings will be displayed at the point of sale. We hope that this will be enforced.

Outdoor smoking areas in the entertainment industry are now being allowed as long as they meet certain requirements; and workers will not be required to serve in these areas. Again we hope that this requirement be enforced so as to protect the health of the workers.

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Member Organizations:

Association of General Practitioners of Jamaica • Caribbean College of Family Physicians, Jamaica Chapter
Caribbean Public Health Association • Diabetes Association of Jamaica • Jamaica Cancer Society • Jamaica Dental Association
Nurses Association of Jamaica • The Heart Foundation of Jamaica • The Medical Association of Jamaica

We are concerned about the reduction in the level of fines for breaches of the Regulations. Fines must be at a level that they act as a deterrent; otherwise the Regulations will not be effective.

We applaud the Minister of Health and his team at the Ministry for the hard work that went into drafting these Regulations and for having the courage to stand up for the health of the Jamaican people notwithstanding the challenges. We look forward, in the near future, to the passage of comprehensive tobacco control legislation, in keeping with the FCTC, which will include the banning of advertising, promotion and sponsorship by the tobacco industry.

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