The Heart Foundation of Jamaica

Advocating for FOPL

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GLOBAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROJECT

Policy Priorities

- Sugary drinks tax (advocacy, awareness, policy support)
- Front of Package Labelling (work with BSJ and MOH)
- Marketing of sugary drinks to children (Broadcasting Commission)
- Support for healthy foods in schools (work with MOH and MOEYI)
Background
Food Labelling in Jamaica

• Adopted the CARICOM Regional Standard as a Jamaican Standard JS CRS 5: 2010 Jamaican Standard Specification for Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods

• General labelling

• Nutritional labelling (facts panel)
  ○ voluntary but compulsory where a health or nutrition claim is made

• Nutrition Label reading in Jamaica?
Background

Food Labelling in Jamaica

• Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) – Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries (MICAF)

• Development & adoption process requires final approvals by the BSJ board & MICAF

• National Labelling Technical Committee/Mirror Committee - stakeholders

• Representation on the Regional Labelling Technical Committee
**Activities**

- **Joined the Labelling Committee**
- **Contributed to the comment process providing scientific evidence for comments**
- **Education & sensitization – media & social media, grass roots, NGO partners, consumers**
- **Advocacy**
- **Research partners**
Ongoing industry opposition – FOPL consultations

Hard on small companies
- Cost to rebrand/ relabel
- Blacklisting of products
- Impact on sales
- May cause job losses

Trade implications
- Not aligned with trade partners
- Not aligned with CODEX
- May create a barrier to trade

Alternative science
- No basis for FOP labelling
- Need for sugar in our bodies/diet
- Sugar in foods is as much problem as drinks

Preferences
- Prefer USA/UK traffic light model over Chilean model (black octagon) which is attractive/less solemn
- Self regulation
**Counter arguments**

**Not aligned to our international trading partners**
- Approved by other countries (Peru, Uruguay, Canada, Israel)
- Consideration at the CODEX/international level
- USA is a major trading partner for Jamaica, Chile and Brazil (food product import & export) *World Bank, 2017*

**Cost to rebrand/relabel/impact on sales/market appeal**
- Industry rebranding for special events/seasons (e.g. sporting events)/ to meet labelling requirements of other jurisdictions
- Obesity & NCD rates continue to increase
- Balance of cost of healthcare

**The Traffic light label**
- Evidence based
- When compared to traffic light label FOP warning labels better able to help consumers identify products with high content of unhealthy nutrients
- Chilean FOP warning labels were effective in shifting consumption behaviour
• “The JMEA executive has raised concerns that the format being pushed on local businesses by the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) and the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) is based on one used by Chile and Brazil, with which Jamaica’s trade in real terms is minuscule”
No need for alarm as regional labelling standard is being revised, said BSJ

Saturday, May 04, 2019

“The final standard to be implemented, it said, will be based on the consensus among the various stakeholders in Jamaica, and reiterated its commitment to the consultative process in standards development, locally and regionally.”
- Balance of representation (industry vs other groups) at Committee & Board level
  - public authorities/health
  - scientists/professional institutions
  - academia

- Mirror committee operations
  - Voting (one stakeholder group should have one vote)
  - National positions

- Delays in the process

- Influence & lobbying

- Evidence based
Way forward?
The masses agree.....

- Post campaign evaluation conducted July 2018
- 1571 adults (18-55)
- Showed public support for policy priorities

91% of respondents agree that there should be clear warning labels on the front of food and beverage packages to warn consumers when products are high in sugar, salt or fats.
Thank You!