



HCC Civil Society Action Plan 2017-2021: Preventing Childhood Obesity in the Caribbean Webinar Series

WEBINAR 2: Pushing and Pulling: The Caribbean Experience Moving Towards Front-Of-Package Nutrition Labels

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We are delighted to welcome you to the HCC webinar series on childhood obesity prevention in the Caribbean. The series supports the HCC Civil Society Action Plan 2017-2021: Preventing Childhood Obesity in the Caribbean - and is intended to build the capacity of civil society organisations (CSO's) and other key stakeholders advocating for and implementing childhood obesity prevention policies in the Caribbean.

This second webinar, entitled – “**Pushing and Pulling: The Caribbean Experience Moving Towards Front-Of-Package Nutrition Labels**”, examines regional multistakeholder efforts, experiences and perspectives related to the promotion of a CARICOM front-of-package nutrition warning label.

There is a crisis of overweight and obesity in the Caribbean with some countries experiencing astounding levels of adult obesity approaching 70% and one in every three children being overweight or obese. This dangerous epidemic is fueled by a dramatic shift in diets towards processed and ultra-processed, energy dense and nutrient poor foods – most of which the region imports.

The 2019 Lancet Report: ***Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems*** highlighted that unhealthy diets pose a greater risk to morbidity and mortality than does unsafe sex, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined. Urgent action is needed globally and, in our region, to dramatically shift diets away from unhealthy foods towards ‘real food’.

The WHO, PAHO, CARPHA and the HCC, all recommend a suite of policy interventions to tackle childhood obesity and these include the provision of mandatory front of package warning labels. There is a growing body of evidence which is clear and unambiguous - warning labels assist consumers in making informed decisions about the nutritional content of pre-packaged foods and

beverages. Recent unpublished data show an almost 25% reduction in purchases of unhealthy foods post the introduction of front of package labels. Moreover, FOPL is an essential element of any comprehensive package of policy interventions to combat childhood obesity. It defines the products which should be taxed to discourage consumption; it defines the products which cannot be marketed to children in various settings; and it defines the products which should not be accessible to children in schools.

It must also be emphasized that there is a clear mandate on this matter from CARICOM Heads of Government who, at their Thirty-Ninth regular meeting in July 2018, specifically called for the implementation of policies geared to preventing childhood obesity, including Front of Package (FOP) labelling. And so there is a directive from the highest levels to prioritize this policy intervention.

The CARICOM region is currently engaged in an extensive consultation process around the adoption of mandatory Front-Of-Package (FOP) nutrition labels.

We hope that this webinar will contribute to greater awareness and support for the introduction of mandatory warning labels in the region by all sectors of society whether they be the general public, policymakers or the private sector.

We are delighted to present an excellent panel of speakers who will provide background on the nutrition labels and make the case for the 'High In' front of pack warning label. We will hear about the regional process around the adoption of the revised standards and the government and civil society experiences in advocating for FOP nutrition labels. We will learn about global experiences including that of Canada and Uruguay. We will explore practical implications of the proposed scheme including the impact on regional trade. And finally, we will discuss next steps to move us closer to a regional FOPL standard and ultimately national regulation.