Moving the Food and Nutrition Policy Agenda Forward
Canada

Mary R. L’Abbé, CM, PhD
Professor, Department of Nutritional Sciences
Director, WHO Collaborating Centre on Nutrition Policy for NCD Prevention

ACCELERATING NUTRITION POLICIES IN THE CARIBBEAN
Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Children
Bridgetown, Barbados – September 17-18, 2019
Rating - How are governments doing?

Opportunities for improvement

Creating healthier food environments in Canada:
Current policies and priority actions

Copies Available for Federal Report and 12 provinces/Territories on our Website

http://labbelab.utoronto.ca/
HEALTHY EATING STRATEGY:
Suite of policies aimed at “making the healthier choice the easier choice”

Toward Front-of-Package Nutrition Labels for Canadians
Consultation Document

Toward Restricting Unhealthy Food and Beverage Marketing to Children
Discussion paper for public consultation

Health Canada, Healthy Eating Strategy (2016)
Moving to Public Health Policies which Enable Healthier Food Choices - Shifting the Responsibility!

- **Education** (e.g. Food Guides, Labelling educ)
- **Regulation** (e.g. mandating information)
- **Regulation (Reformulation)** (e.g. improve the Food Environment)

**Individual Responsibility**

**Creating Healthier Environments**
How “healthy” is the Canadian packaged food supply? An analysis using the FSANZ model for health claims (cut-off ≥ 3.5/5)
U of T Food Label Information Program (FLIP)
(Over 45,000 unique foods in 2010, 2013 and 2017)
About **half** of the Canadian packaged food supply would be considered “healthy”

*Based on FLIP 2013; n=15,286 products analyzed

Labonté et al. 2016
FRONT-OF-PACKAGE (FOP) LABELLING

Toward Front-of-Package Nutrition Labels for Canadians

Consultation Document

Canada Gazette, Part I - February 10, 2018
FOP Labelling, global timeline:

- **Sweden** (1989): Establishes criteria for and introduces the Keyhole logo.
- **The Netherlands** (2006): The first country to introduce the Choices logo.
- **Poland** (2008): Introduces the Choices Programme logo.
- **European Union** (2011): EU Regulation 1169/2011 allows EU Member States plus Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland to develop voluntary FOP guidelines which allow Guideline Daily Amount or voluntary traffic light styles.
- **South Korea** (2011): Implements voluntary traffic light labelling on children’s food products for total sugars, fat, saturated fat and sodium.
- **Czech Republic** (2011): Introduces the Choices Programme logo.
- **Finland** (1993): Implements mandatory display of warning labels on foods high in salt.
- **Singapore** (2003): Extends the Healthier Choice symbol to hawkers and food-service operators.
- **Belgium** (2007): Introduces the Choices Programme logo.
- **Thailand** (2007): Makes Guidelines Daily Amount and warning label mandatory for five categories of snack foods, and introduces a voluntary logo for products with 25% less salt, sugar or saturated fat.
- **Sweden/Denmark/Norway** (2009): Launch a common voluntary Keyhole logo to identify healthy foods.
- **Fiji/Solomon Islands** (2009): Introduces on-shelf labels for foods high in fat.
- **Chile** (2012): Approves the Chilean Law of Food Labeling and Advertising to require warning labels for products high in salt, sugar, fat and energy (calories).

Canada’s proposed FOP Labelling (Canada Gazette Part I - Feb10, 2018)

- A warning-based type of system
  - Symbol design (not yet finalized)
  - Thresholds for saturated fat, sugars, sodium
  - Exemptions
  - Format specifications
- Mandatory on all foods, exceeding 15% thresholds
- Will come in force, December 2022

Symbol - likely similar to one of these designs; final design not yet finalized

Manufacturers have 5 years to adapt/reformulate ....
Proportion of Products in FLIP 2013: That would require a FOP Symbol

Based on CGI (2018) published criteria

Christoforou et al 2018, unpublished
CANADIAN M2K POLICY TIMELINE:

- **1980** Québec Consumer Protection Act
- **2010** WHO Set of Rec’s on restricting M2K
- **Nov 2015** Minister of Health Mandate Letter
- **Sept 2016** Introduction of Bill S-228: The Child Health Protection Act
- **Sept 2017** Bill S-228: passed in Senate
- **Sept 2018** Bill S-228: passed 3rd reading in House of Commons

**Most recent update on proposed regulations May 2018**

- **CAI Uniform Nutrition Criteria Dec 2015**
- **Health Canada’s Healthy Eating Strategy Oct 2016**
- **Public consultations on proposed regulations for M2K Jun–Aug 2017**

Introduction of the Canadian Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CAI) 2007
Is the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children comparable to that of foods marketed to a general audience?
Proportion of packaged foods eligible for M2K; → Most foods **currently M2K** would NOT be eligible

- **ALL FOODS** *(n=15,197)*
  - Allowed under “Low in”
  - **16%**
  - Allowed under “High in”, **not** “Low in”
  - **18%**
  - Not allowed under “High in”
  - **66%**

- **KIDS FOODS** *(n=747)*
  - Allowed under “Low in”
  - **15%**
  - Allowed under “High in”
  - **2%**
  - Not allowed under “High in”
  - **83%**

* With child-directed marketing on package
Marketing to children on major food company websites

Collected screen captures from top food company websites (spring/summer 2017; n=41)

- Largest packaged food (n=16), beverage (n=12) and restaurant chain (n=13) companies in Canada.
- Scanned for marketing to children
- Recorded presence of company policies on marketing to children
  - 43% had policies

So how is the Canadian Food Supply?
Marketing to Children

- Foods that are the most heavily M2K on packages and on food company websites are less healthy than comparable products
- Most would not be eligible to be M2K under current proposals
- BUT, marketing on food packs is currently not included (HC Dec 2018)
Changing Food Environments – Be ready for the fight back!

Canada wants clearer warnings on junk food. The US is using NAFTA to stop them.

Canada is poised to become the second high-income country, after Chile, to put warning labels on foods high in salt, sugar, and fat.

Victory for sugary drinks industry as US court blocks health warnings on adverts

A win for the soda industry in the wider sugary beverage war

Jeremy B White San Francisco | Tuesday 19 September 2017 23:06 | 4 comments

Big Soda scores victory as Chicago-area tax repealed

WTO member delegations challenge Chile’s proposed “stop” sign food labels

Argentina, Canada, Columbia, the European Union, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and the United States
Health Canada Transparency of Stakeholder Communications with Government:

- Online database of meeting documents and correspondence
- 330 meetings or correspondence documents (October 2016 to June 2019).
  - 88 were Health Canada initiated (79 meetings and 9 correspondences)
  - 241 were stakeholder initiated (175 meetings and 66 correspondences)

Meetings and correspondence on healthy eating

Find out about meetings and correspondence with stakeholders in regard to the healthy eating strategy.

Please note that access to this information, document or hyperlink to a unilingual website was provided as a courtesy in the official language in which an entity not subject to the Official Languages Act has submitted to us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type of interaction</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Health Canada office</th>
<th>Document(s) shared</th>
<th>Order a copy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2/3 of communications with Health Canada were stakeholder initiated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic area</th>
<th>Total number of documents</th>
<th>% of total documents</th>
<th>Health Canada Initiated</th>
<th>Stakeholder Initiated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food guide</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front of package labelling</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Eating Strategy</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to Kids</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>330</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Avg:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Avg:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avg: Health Canada Initiated 34%  Stakeholder Initiated 66%
FOP & M2K correspondence was mostly from industry stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic area</th>
<th>Total number of documents</th>
<th>Number or documents for different stakeholders</th>
<th>Healthcare Stakeholder</th>
<th>Industry Stakeholder</th>
<th>Other Stakeholder</th>
<th>Multiple Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food guide</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front of package labelling</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Eating Strategy</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to Kids</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the Senate rose in June 2019 and with the call of the election last week, Bill S-228 effectively died.

The regulations on FOP Labelling similarly have died, as the government cannot issue further regulations once the election has been called.

Also the 18 month limit between CG, Part I and Part II has now been exceeded, so any new regulations will have to be introduced again at CGI.
Thank You! - Questions

Funding Support

Acknowledgements

Research Team:
Mavra Ahmed, PhD
Beatriz Franco-Arellano, MSc
Jodi Bernstein, MPH, PhD
Anthea Christoforou, PhD
Kacie Dickinson, PhD
Salma Hack, BSc
Kimiya Karbasy, BSc
Christine Mulligan, BSc
Sarah Murphy, BSc
Alena Ng, BSc
Alyssa Schermel, MSc
Lana Vanderlee, PhD
Laura Vergeer, BSc
Madyson Weippert, BSc

Collaborators
JoAnne Arcand, UOIT
Adriana Blanco-Meltzer, INCENSA
Lauretette Dube, McGill
Mahsa Jessri, U Ottawa
Marie Eve Labonte, U Laval
Wendy Lou, UofT
Elizabeth Mansfield, Health Canada
Doug Manuel, OHRI, ICES
Jean Claude Moubarac, U Montreal
Bruce Neal, George Inst, U Sydney
Monique Potvin Kent, U Ottawa
Veronique Provencher, Laval
Mike Rayner, U Oxford, UK
Boyd Swinburn, U Auckland, NZ

http://labbelab.utoronto.ca/
mary.labbe@utoronto.ca