



## THIRD ANNUAL CARIBBEAN ALCOHOL REDUCTION DAY

### YOUTH: Let's Talk About Alcohol

Thursday November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## Concept Note

The HCC will be hosting *The Third Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day* on Thursday November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 under the theme: Youth: Let's Talk About Alcohol.

### Justification

The harmful use of alcohol, along with tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, is recognized as one of four major common risk factors for NCDs; yet alcohol has received comparatively less attention than the other 3 risk factors. Alcohol and its over use, contributes to a number of cancers, liver disease, cardiovascular disease, mental illness, violence, accidents and injuries. A major recent global study published in the Lancet concluded that 'alcohol is a colossal global health issue' and there is 'no safe level of alcohol consumption'<sup>1</sup>.

Globally, alcohol consumption is the seventh leading risk factor for premature death and disability<sup>2</sup> and among people aged 15–49, alcohol is the leading risk factor for death and disability in the Americas and worldwide. Prevalence rates of current drinking are second highest among 15–19-year-olds in the Region of the Americas at 38.2%<sup>3</sup>.

In the world of today, young people's drinking habits differ from that of the generations before them. Despite many decades of battles by international organizations like the World Health Organisation, against the harmful use of alcohol, social barriers, particularly drinking cultures in the Caribbean population, continue to hamper efforts to reduce harmful consumption of alcohol. Recent trends suggest that young people drink less on average, but that they are more prone to

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736\(18\)31571-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(18)31571-X/fulltext)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/safer/launch/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/safer/launch/en/)

<sup>3</sup> Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274603/9789241565639-eng.pdf?ua=1>

heavy episodic or binge drinking when they do drink<sup>4</sup>. In addition, advertising, a culture that promotes alcohol use and peer pressure, compel many youths to drink at an early age. Alcohol today is cheap, readily available and heavily marketed. Furthermore, historically and up to the present time, the alcohol industry plays a significant role in Caribbean economies. As a result, young people are growing up in a pro-drinking society where alcohol is seen as the norm.

The English-Speaking Caribbean is of particular concern with up to 75% of adolescent males age 15-19 engaging in heavy episodic. Due to cultural norms, exposure to alcohol starts before age 14 in most of the Eastern Speaking Caribbean despite legal drinking ages of 16 and above. In addition, road traffic accidents and interpersonal violence continues to be of grave concern in many Caribbean territories, due to its significant association with alcohol use. These behaviors ultimately lead to significant long-term and short-term outcomes associated with harmful alcohol use.

Despite the endorsement of the [Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol](#) in 2010, there has been little global and regional progress in curbing alcohol consumption. Implementation of the WHO Best Buys<sup>5</sup> to reduce the harmful use of alcohol in the Caribbean has been abysmal. Only a handful of countries in the region have prioritized alcohol control and developed policies however these are largely in draft. At the global level, WHO recently released the 2018 [Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health](#) and launched the [WHO SAFER](#) action package designed to assist member states in fast tracking alcohol policy implementation in support of achieving the global target of reducing harmful use of alcohol by 10% by 2025. SAFER provides five high-impact strategic actions that are prioritized for implementation to promote health and development.

Last year on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) held the “*Second Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day: Drink Less, Reduce Cancer*”. The initiative was **aimed at sensitising the people of the Caribbean about the harmful effects of abuse of alcohol with a focus on the association between alcohol use and cancer.**

This initiative continues in its long term effort to foster wider stakeholder involvement, with official sponsorship of the initiative by PAHO, CARPHA and CARICOM Secretariat.

### **The Third Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day – 2018**

*The Third Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day* will be held on Thursday November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The theme will be: YOUTH: Let’s Talk About Alcohol.

The objectives of the 2018 CARD are to:

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<sup>4</sup> Regional Status Report on Alcohol and Health in the Americas. <https://www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2015/Alcohol-Report-Health-Americas-2015.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> ‘Best buys’ and other recommended interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. Tackling NCDs. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259232/WHO-NMH-NVI-17.9-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.

1. Increase public and policymaker awareness about the levels of youth alcohol consumption and the associated short- and long-term harms.
2. Initiate a parental influencer campaign which calls on parents and guardians to actively participate in alcohol reduction in the youth by:
  - Speaking to young people about alcohol and its dangers.
  - Reducing availability and acceptability of alcohol use in the home.
  - Engaging discussion around the drinking culture and associated pressures.
  - Acting as guides to help young people understand and process alcohol advertising around them.
3. Sensitise the public about the new [WHO SAFER alcohol control initiative to prevent and reduce alcohol-related death and disability](#) and the [Global Status report on alcohol and health in 2018](#).
4. Call on Policy makers to implement specific policies to reduce alcohol consumption among young people (WHO Best Buys).
  1. Increase excise taxes on alcoholic beverages.
  2. Enact and enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on exposure to alcohol advertising (across multiple types of media).
  3. Reducing alcohol availability in community setting by more strictly regulating alcohol distribution licenses especially around youth-oriented events.
  4. Work towards a minimum pricing of alcohol across Caribbean communities.

The dissemination plan for the 2018 CARD will mimic the actions adopted for the 2017 CARD. Targeted messaging for a cross section of audiences will be developed in support of the theme and policy asks and this messaging will be distributed through the HCC communication channels (HCC Weekly News Roundup, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and the channels of key HCC partners. Materials and messages will include:

- Statements of support for the HCC Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day from regional and international partners.
- CARD Infographics
- CARD Social Media Videos
- CARD Webinar
- Links to regional and global resources.
- Links to HCC alcohol related content including webinars.

#### Partners

PAHO, CARPHA, CARICOM Secretariat and the UWI Open Campus.

#### Statement of Exclusion

Neither the alcohol industry nor the tobacco industry, nor any persons, institutions, or organisations with relations with these industries will be a partner in the Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day.