



HCC Secretariat, Culloden Office Complex, Culloden Road, St Michael, Barbados, BB11155, Tel. 246 435 -7486, [www.healthycaribbean.org](http://www.healthycaribbean.org)

**PRESS RELEASE- EMBARGOED UNTIL APRIL 10, 2021 AT 11:30 AM**

**Healthy Caribbean Youth (HCY) Urging CARICOM to Implement Octagonal High In Front-of-Package Warning Labelling (FOPWL)**

**BRIDGETOWN, 10 April 2021** – Voting is currently underway across CARICOM Member States to adopt the Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard for Specification for labelling of pre-packaged foods (FDCRS 5:2010), which includes specifications for octagonal high in warning labels that would be placed on the front of packaged products. The labels, if adopted, would help persons to quickly, easily and correctly identify foods high in sugars, sodium, or fats which, when consumed in excess can contribute to non-communicable diseases, overweight and obesity. These labels can ultimately help consumers make healthier choices.

As a part of advocacy, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)'s youth arm - Healthy Caribbean Youth (HCY), with support from local civil society organisations and allies will be hosting a **Call to Action** on **Saturday April 10th between 10:30AM and 11:30AM AST/10:30AM JA** time across a number of CARICOM territories (Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Grenada, Bahamas and Barbados).

The staging will include 5 persons (youth and other interested persons) physically distanced, to pose at various sites of historical significance, in t-shirts and holding posters with messages to our leaders. The staging will be "silent". This silent presentation poses as a reminder to CARICOM leaders, that they have committed to fast-tracking policies to address obesity in children and more broadly, poor diets and NCDs. The HCY are heeding the call to "fight back against obesity and NCDs" by highlighting one policy which is part of a suite of policy solutions, identified by the World Health Organisation.

FOPWL has been implemented in countries like [Mexico and Chile](#). Researchers from Mexico's National Institute of Public Health estimate that Mexico's warning labels on food and drink packages, implemented in October 2020, will reduce caloric intake by 14.7% after five years of implementation and save the country an estimated US\$1.8 billion in obesity costs<sup>1</sup>. The introduction of Front of Package Warning Labelling (FOPWL) is supported by strong CARICOM mandates, including but not limited to, the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration, the Communiqués of the 37th and 39th Conference of Heads of State and Government, the CARPHA 6-point policy package to address overweight and obesity, and the PAHO Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents. It is critical for all stakeholders to understand that FOPWL does not negatively impact trade; the cost implications are short term and outweighed by the long-term health benefits and cost savings in the health sector. The octagon high-in warning label system is the best performing system for the public health objective of allowing consumers to correctly, quickly, and easily identify products that contain excessive amounts of critical nutrients – nutrients which when consumed in excess increase the risk of overweight, obesity and NCDs. This was supported by a recent study carried out by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and partners in Jamaica.<sup>2</sup>

Children need nutritious foods in order to grow, learn and thrive. Adults need nutritious foods in order to remain productive and healthy members of society. If the Standard is approved and endorsed, the Caribbean will join a growing number of countries that use the octagonal warning label regulations to combat obesity and NCDs and ultimately protect the rights of their citizens to know what is in their food.

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<sup>1</sup> Predicting obesity reduction after implementing warning labels in Mexico: A modeling study:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1003221>

<sup>2</sup> Superior Efficacy of Front-of-Package Warning Labels in Jamaica: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53328>



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**For more information visit our webpage:**

Healthy Caribbean Coalition: <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/front-of-package-warning-labelling-fopwl/>

***The HCC:***

*Healthy Caribbean Coalition is the only regional NCD alliance of health and non-health civil society organizations. HCC, with over 100 members, works closely with regional and international leaders in NCD prevention and control to leverage the power of civil society by strengthening and supporting its membership in the implementation of programmes aimed at reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with NCDs. Follow HCC on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)*

**Media contacts:**

Danielle Walwyn: [Danielle.Walwyn@healthycaribbean.org](mailto:Danielle.Walwyn@healthycaribbean.org)

Sheena Warner-Edwards: [sheena.warner-edwards@healthycaribbean.org](mailto:sheena.warner-edwards@healthycaribbean.org)

