



CIVIL SOCIETY EXPERIENCES ADVOCATING FOR FOOD POLICIES IN JAMAICA

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***Advocacy Officer - Global Health Advocacy Project,
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**Healthy Caribbean Coalition - Our food, Our health, Our people
Accelerating Healthy Food Policies to Tackle NCDs
July 1, 2021**

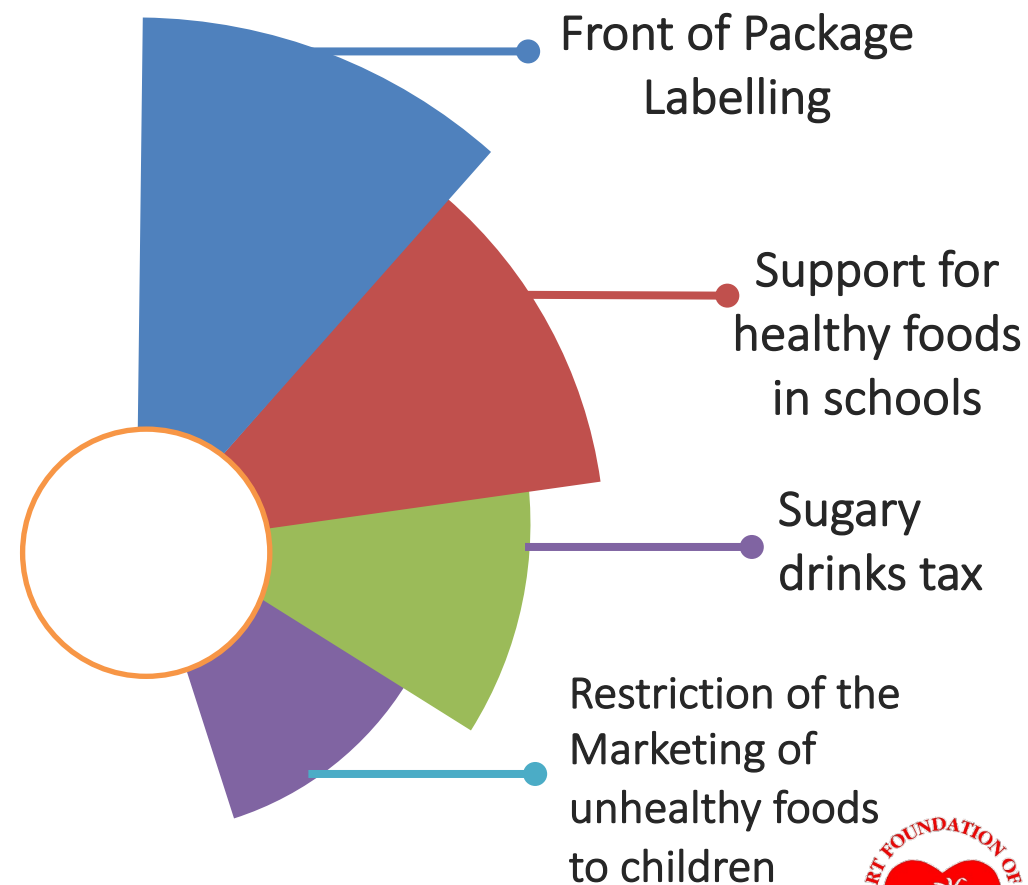


GLOBAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROJECT (2017 -)



- **Objective** – to increase public and policy maker awareness on the health impact of unhealthy foods and beverages (*foods high in added sugar, saturated & trans-fat and sodium*) and to build support for obesity and NCD prevention policies
- **Jamaica's health landscape**
 - Increasing NCDs and obesity in adults and children
 - Unhealthy eating practices
 - NCDs - almost 80% of deaths in Jamaica
 - Vulnerability to COVID-19
 - Need to provide a supportive environment to encourage healthy eating

Policy priorities - Aligned to national, regional and international plans and policies



MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS



We have the Right to Know!

Foods high in **salt, fats and sugar** increase the risk of hypertension, obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

Now more than ever, we have the right to know what's in our food.

Give us warning labels on the front of our food packages!



Phase 2 – FOPL Right to know

Do we know what we're eating?

One in two Jamaicans is overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and 13 types of cancer.

We need full information on food labels. We have the right to know what we're eating.

What's in our food? Give us the facts!

Phase 1 - FOPL

Are We Drinking Ourselves Sick?

"I find that more young people are becoming overweight and obese. Some as early as their 20's, and even children."
DR. KEVIN MALES
Family Physician

Sugary drinks may bring on obesity which could increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers*.

SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH. SUPPORT A SUGARY DRINKS TAX.

*World Cancer Research Fund International (2015). Combating global cancer: understanding effective lifestyle choices to help prevent leading cancer-causing diseases.

Phase 4

ARE YOUR CHILDREN DRINKING THEMSELVES SICK?

Sugary drinks can destroy your children's teeth by causing painful tooth decay. And could bring on obesity which could lead to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers. Sugary drinks are high in empty calories and have no nutritional value.

1 (330ml) SUGAR = 1 TEASPOON SUGAR

SBD Sugar Sweetened Beverages		Tetra Packings		Bottle Water	
BOTTLE SODA 600ml 15 - 30 teaspoons 15-18g/100ml	BOX DRINK 450ml 12 - 15 teaspoons 12-13g/100ml	TETRA PACKINGS 200ml 5 - 6 teaspoons 10-12g/100ml	FLAVOURED WATER 500ml - 600ml 6 - 8 teaspoons 6g-8g/100ml	BOTTLE WATER NO SUGAR ADDED 1000ml 0g/100ml	

Just **ONE** sugary drink often has more sugar than your child should have in one day.

Cut out those sugary drinks at home and at school. Drink Water Instead!

Phase 3

YOUR CHILDREN COULD BE DRINKING THEMSELVES SICK.

Just because they're active, doesn't mean sugary drinks aren't damaging their health.

Sugary drinks are a big reason for the obesity crisis in Jamaica.

Drinking too many sugary drinks can bring on type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and tooth decay.

Drink water instead!

Phase 2

Sweet drinks for the day equal more than
50 teaspoons of sugar



ARE YOU DRINKING YOURSELF SICK?

You are probably having sweet drinks that equal more than 50 teaspoons of sugar a day.

This may bring on obesity which could lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease or even some cancers.

Drink water instead!

Phase 1



ACTIVITIES



Public Education & Outreach

- Materials
- Schools, churches, community/civic groups, guest lectures
- Forums & Webinars

Advocacy meetings

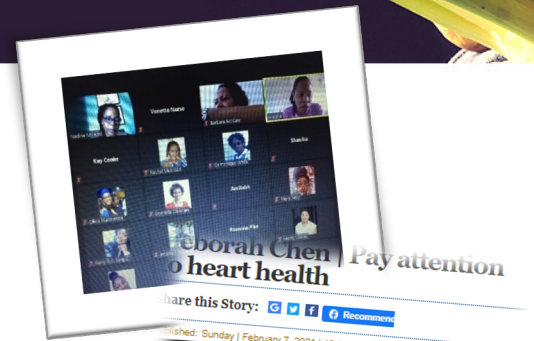
- Ministers and MDAs
- Technical support to advance policies

Social media

- Regular posting on healthy nutrition, physical activity know your numbers, gardening
- Podcast
- Twitter chat

Media engagement

- Journalism training
- Articles, ads, radio series
- Letters to the editor/Interviews



Support for continued government leadership to tackle obesity in Jamaica

An open letter to the Government of Jamaica

We, the undersigned organisations dedicated to public health, call on your office to fight the growing obesity epidemic in Jamaica. We strongly support the recent decision by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information to create 'Sugar-Swap' days in public schools and health facilities. In January 2021, this is a landmark move to fight the growing obesity epidemic among our children in Jamaica. In the Caribbean, the Guyana Health, Education and Training Institute have recently taken steps to encourage sugar-free drinks in schools with the expressed desire to reduce obesity rates in children.

As the next step towards protecting the health of Jamaicans, we strongly encourage the Government of Jamaica to consider introducing 'sugar-free' days. This measure will reduce the consumption of high-sugar and high-fat foods and beverages. We also encourage the Government of Jamaica to consider introducing 'sugar-free' days in public schools and health facilities. We also encourage the Government of Jamaica to consider introducing 'sugar-free' days in public schools and health facilities.

We are also encouraged to see that some of our stakeholders are introducing and have taken steps to reduce their products by reducing sugar content.

We call for a sugar-free day to be implemented in Jamaica.



ACHIEVEMENTS



- Partnerships
 - **18 formal NGOs partners many outreach partners**
 - National Food Industry Task Force
 - Cobranding with the Min. of Health
- Restriction of beverages in schools effective Jan 2019
- School nutrition policy to be signed off by Cabinet
- Meeting with several ministries & providing technical support
 - School nutrition policy and Interim guidelines
 - Cabinet submission for SSB tax
 - FOPL and Nutrition Labelling meetings
 - Marketing of unhealthy foods to children
- Reformulation

- Strong public support for campaign (Aug. 2019 Post-campaign Evaluation Findings)

92% strongly support or support front of pack warning labels on food and drinks

82% strongly agree on the policy requiring clear warning labels on the front of food and beverage packages that warn when foods are high in sugar, salt or fats

87% strongly agree to support government efforts to increase children's access to healthy foods and drinks

71% - support of a tax on sugary drinks



CHALLENGES-

barriers to a healthier food environment



Socio economic issues affecting access to and availability of healthy foods

- Social determinants of health, food security
- Lack of knowledge of healthy eating practices
- Geographic location etc.

Framework policies/ plans are in place; recommended policy solutions not yet implemented

- Requires political will and resources
- Process not always clear

Lack of evidence base-decision making

- Challenges to existing evidence

Increase in marketing and corporate social responsibility

- Blurred lines between CSR and interference
- Marketing to children

Aggressive food industry lobby and push back

- Law suit
- SSB tax and FOPL
- Delay tactics
- Regional coordination



Sugary drinks tax



JMEA
Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters' Association

FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY
YOUR BUSINESSES ARE AT RISK.

Whether you are micro, small, medium or large - since **sugar, salt or fats** are contained in the products you manufacture or import, you must act now!

IF YOU ARE A:
Food and/or Beverage Manufacturer / Exporter
Food and/or Beverage Importer

JOIN US FOR AN IMPORTANT MEETING:
Tuesday, March 5, 2019 | Begins at 9:30 a.m. | JMEA, 85A Duke Street, Kingston

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (JMEA)
(876) 922-8880-3 | (876) 922-8869
Email: jamaica@jmea.org

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Sugar Tax Blowback - Pandohie Chastises Advertising Attacks, Possible Levy

Share this Story: G, T, F, R, Recommend 10

Published: Thursday, February 28, 2019 | 12:10 AM | Christopher Serju/Gleaner Writer

Pandohie

Big Sugar has characterized as ill-advised and misguided a month-long media blitz against the government and has warned that the instant campaign for a tax on sugary drinks will not achieve behaviour change.

Any imposition of a sugar tax would only provide a revenue windfall for the Government instead of triggering a change in consumer patterns, said Richard Pandohie, deputy president of the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"I am disappointed that aspects of the Ministry of Health's engagement have been

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LETTERS 12

Editorial

The 'Steele Doctrine' could well apply to proposed sugary drinks tax

MR Marcus Steele, Carreras Limited managing director, is no doubt looking out for his company's well-being, but his warning about the likely consequences of an additional tax on cigarettes could apply to the proposed tax on sugary drinks.

Of course, we in this space do not hesitate to throw our support behind the Health Ministry's campaign to reduce sugar intake, especially among children. The science has clearly established the obvious dangers to health from over consumption of sugar.

What we are concerned about is the proposal for yet another tax that, fly high, fly low, will be passed onto non-consumers, whether directly or indirectly, through price increases on other products handled by the same distributor.

A tax on sugary drinks, if it goes forward, should by no means be a first resort. That is seeking the easy way out, as is our wont in this country. The Health Ministry has indicated it will be turning next to the reduction of consumption

JMEA Vows To 'Fight To The Death' Against Sugary Drinks Tax

Share this Story: G, T, F, R, Recommend 10

Published: Thursday | March 7, 2019 | 12:05 AM | Christopher Serju/Gleaner Writer

Metry Seaga, president of the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (JMEA), speaking with Imega Breese McNab, executive director of the JMEA, at the food and beverage industry meeting in Kingston on Tuesday.

Kenyon Hemans

The Ministry of Health is on a collision course with players in the food and beverage industry who have vowed to "fight to the death" against what they termed the wide-



BSJ, Manufacturers At Loggerheads Over Packaging Standards

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Published: Thursday | March 28, 2019 | 12:31 AM | Christopher Serju/Gleaner Writer



Kenyon Hemans/Photographer

Melv Seana (right), president of the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters'



JMEA concerned about implementation of front of package labelling

Monday, March 01, 2021



KINGSTON, Jamaica — The Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association (JMEA) has expressed concerns regarding the inclusion of the proposed front of package labelling (FOPL) model in the finalised draft of the Caricom Regional standard.

In a statement today, the association said it is wholly committed to supporting measures that effectively address non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among the people and supports a holistic approach to the comprehensive policy response to front of package labelling (FOPL).

Front of Package Labelling

Label resistance

Consumer groups, regulators push back as fears swirl over business fallout

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Published: Friday | June 11, 2021 | 12:15 AM | Nadine Wilson-Harris/Staff Reporter



Sample of Chilean front-of-package label.

Contributed

A proposal to use Chilean octagonal warnings on food and beverage packaging throughout the Caribbean has been flatly rejected by local consumer advocacy and

Richard Pandohie | Front-of-package labelling – the JMEA perspective

Share this Story:

Published: Sunday | June 27, 2021 | 12:11 AM



Richard Pandohie

File

Using a very well-funded campaign, certain stakeholders – Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ), The Ministry of Health and Wellness, among others – have engaged in a campaign that has portrayed

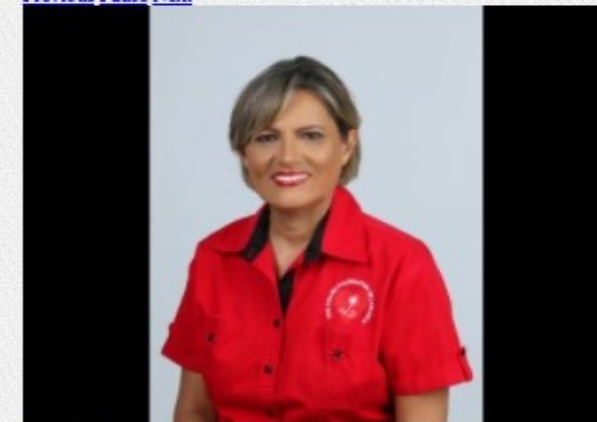
Deborah Chen | Is evidence being ignored in front-of-package labelling

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Published: Tuesday | June 15, 2021 | 7:04 AM

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Contributed
Deborah Chen
1 2

On behalf of the academic and non-governmental organisations (The Heart Foundation of Jamaica, Diabetes Association of Jamaica), members of the National Mirror Committee (NMC), we are very concerned about recent developments in relation to Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods.

We write in relation to two articles published in *The Gleaner* on June 11 titled 'Label resistance' and 'Front-of-package warning labels – CARICOM can either follow science or protect private interests'. We



THE HEART FOUNDATION OF JAMAICA

Founded in 1971 by the Heart Club of Kingston

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E-MAIL: info@heartfoundationja.org • WEBSITE: www.heartfoundationja.org

April 2021

THE NEWS EDITOR

Local, Regional Researchers Provide Evidence About Jamaicans' Preference for Front of Package Warning Labels

Jamaicans are one step closer to having food labels that will help them identify foods high in unhealthy nutrients. Recent research from the leading health agency in the Americas, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), provides empirical evidence about the most effective type of labelling to help local shoppers easily identify processed foods high in unhealthy nutrients such as sugars, salts and fats.

As the Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) continues its call for mandatory Front-of-Package (FOP) labelling, which is a part of the healthy nutrition policy campaign mounted by the organisation and its Coalition partners, it is pushing for important information about unhealthy foods to be placed on the front of food packages and be easy to read in Jamaica.

The HFJ is very pleased with the progress made at last month's meeting of the

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Increase in corporate Social Responsibility since COVID-19

March 2020 - present



- Similar activities seen in the region
- Financial & In kind donations
- Food donations and care packages to health care workers and vulnerable groups e.g. –unintended long term consequences
- **Donations must be responsible** - while needed & necessary, care must be taken to ensure that what is provided does not exacerbate our NCD challenges and cause longer term health issues

PATH students to receive meals from chain restaurants

20 March 2020 – Jamaica Observer

Red Stripe Offers Nutritional Support For Infirmarys, Care Homes 25 March - Gleaner

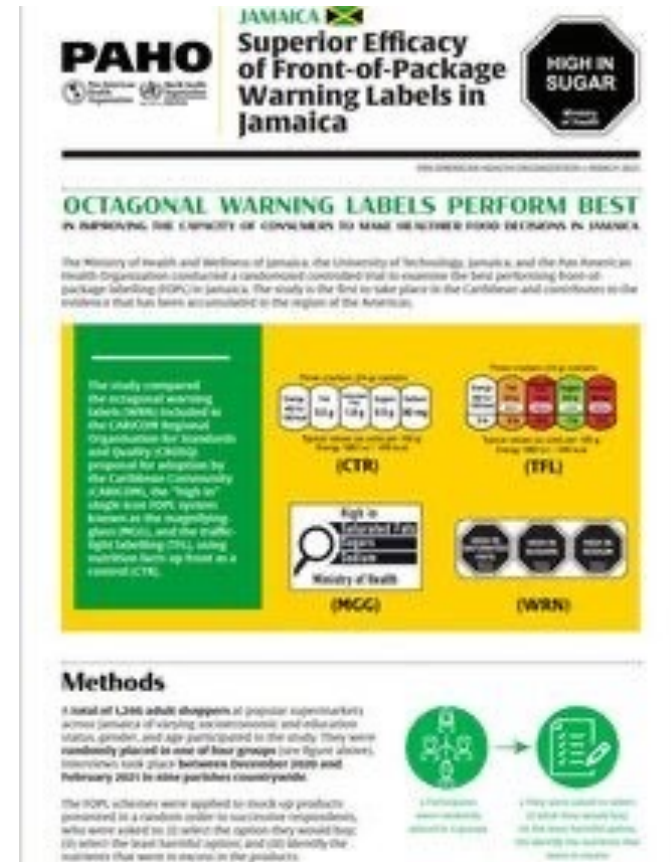
RED STRIPE, part of the Heineken Company, earlier this week donated 1,500 cases of Malta to the Ministry of Local Government to support nutrition programmes in infirmaries across the island. The product, with an approximate retail value of \$6 million, will benefit residents in all 14 infirmaries and three golden age homes managed by local municipalities.



LESSONS LEARNT/WAY FORWARD



- ✓ Public education (especially grass roots)
- ✓ Support from local and international partners
- ✓ Beneficial endorsement of the media campaign by the Ministry of Health & Wellness
- ✓ Multi - stakeholder involvement, engaging the media and partnerships with other NGOs
- ✓ Use Evidence base to strengthen advocacy for policies
- ✓ Sustained media and social media presence
- ✓ Focus group testing is an important step to the cultural acceptability and effectiveness
- ✓ Pre and post campaign testing are important steps to evaluate the campaign
- ✓ Industry push back is often times driven by external forces and influences
- ✓ The public does not necessarily recognize industry interference so it is important that these are highlighted in the context of the food our nation eats



PAHO, UTECH Study, 2020 - Superior Efficacy of Front-of-Package Warning Labels in Jamaica
<https://www.paho.org/en/documents/superior-efficacy-front-package-warning-labels-jamaica>



The background of the image features a dark surface with a white plate containing green beans and sliced carrots. A yellow measuring tape is coiled around the plate, and a black dumbbell is visible in the upper left corner.

Thank you!

For more information

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