



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 April 18

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## **'ONE LIFE ONE YOU' CREATE FOUR-PART VIDEO SERIES ON ENERGY DRINKS**

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 049-13 re “ ‘One Life One You’ Create Four-Part Video Series on Energy Drinks” be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- *One Life One You* Youth Leaders recognized the need to inform and educate their peers regarding the dangers associated with using energy drinks.
- With the support and leadership of Health Unit staff, the Youth Leaders developed engaging videos to address the sugar and caffeine content of energy drinks, and the danger of combining energy drinks with alcohol or physical activity.
- The Youth Leaders plan to explore advocacy opportunities at the local level related to sale of energy drinks in Middlesex-London community-based recreational and physical activity facilities.

### **Background**

The Ontario Energy Drink Work Group (OEDWG) is a provincial committee co-chaired by a Public Health Nurse and a Registered Dietitian from this Health Unit. Membership in OEDWG includes Public Health Nurses (PHNs), Health Promoters and Registered Dietitians (RDs) from 21 Ontario health units and related health organizations. The mandate of the group is to plan and coordinate advocacy and education related to the formulation, sale and consumption of energy drinks in Ontario.

In June 2012, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) unanimously supported the OEDWG's [Energy Drink Resolution](#) sponsored by the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH). alPHA has submitted [advocacy letters](#) to three Federal and Provincial Ministers introducing resolutions and calling for stricter energy drink regulations. In addition to assisting in Federal and Provincial work through alPHA, OEDWG members also engage in consumer education and local policy efforts.

### **One Life One You**

The *One Life One You* Youth Leaders are employed by the Health Unit on the Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control Team team. The seven (7) Youth Leaders are between the ages of 16 and 18 years and come from different neighbourhoods in London. They meet weekly with a Health Promoter to discuss health issues and trends that are of concern to youth in the community. The Youth Leaders plan and implement interactive educational activities/events and health promotion campaigns to address these issues by reaching out to other youth in the community. While most activities of the *One Life One You* group are related to tobacco, they are also able to address other health topics important to the group.

### **Video Development**

In early 2012, *One Life One You* received presentations on chronic disease and injury prevention-related program topics from Health Unit staff to understand the work of and to investigate potential partnerships with the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Communities & Injury Prevention Teams. From the topics presented, the youth chose energy drink education and advocacy. The youth created videos aimed at

informing their peers about the risks associated with energy drink consumption. Each video includes a call to action statement. Evidence-based facts and support were provided by Health Unit staff.

The final product is a series of four [peer-to-peer videos](#) depicting messages about energy drinks. The videos were written, performed, filmed, and edited by *One Life One You*. They are a unique tool to enhance peer-to-peer education enabling youth to make informed and safe choices, thereby reducing overall harm. The following videos provide creative visuals while delivering research-based information and a call to action:

- [Energy Drinks and Sugar](#)

Most energy drinks are packed with sugar. One energy drink can have the same amount of sugar as 5 ½ large donuts. Tell your friends – you wouldn't eat this much sugar... so why drink it?

- [Energy Drinks and the Crash](#)

Drinking high amounts of energy drinks can disrupt sleep at night and increase the chance of falling asleep during the day. Tell your friends – avoid the crash. Lasting energy doesn't come in a can.

- [Energy Drinks and Alcohol](#)

Mixing energy drinks with alcohol may make you FEEL more alert and less drunk... BUT the alcohol still affects you the same. Tell your friends – energy drinks and alcohol don't mix.

- [Energy Drinks and Physical Activity](#)

Drinking energy drinks before or during physical activity can cause muscle cramps, increased heart rate and vomiting. Tell your friends – energy drinks and physical activity don't mix.

## Video Dissemination

The videos, posted on the Health Unit YouTube channel, will be promoted on [www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com) and through the Health Unit Twitter feed. The videos will be presented and distributed by the Health Unit's Young Adult Team and through various professional memberships (e.g. Ontario Energy Drink Work Group, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, Ontario Public Health Association Alcohol Working Group). National distribution through the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse is planned, as well as local promotion through advertisements on local television stations.

The videos will also be promoted through the youth via their personal networks and at their secondary schools. A joint letter from the Youth Leaders and the associated Health Unit staff will be distributed to schools describing the video development process and suggesting ideas for using the videos at the schools. In the future, the videos may be promoted to local minor sports associations with a suggestion to consider an energy drink-free team policy and promoted at Western University health fairs.

## Conclusion/Next Steps

The Youth Leaders, supported by Health Unit staff, developed engaging videos about energy drinks. The Youth Leaders value youth-to-youth education and understand the importance of policy change to create supportive environments. As a next step, the Youth Leaders, in collaboration with Health Unit staff, are investigating the sale of energy drinks in municipal recreation and physical activity facilities. An update will be presented to the Board of Health later this year.

This report was prepared by Ms. Christine Callaghan and Ms. Kim Leacy, Registered Dietitians; Ms. Tanya Weishar, Health Promoter; Ms. Melissa Knowler, Public Health Nurse; and Ms. Linda Stobo, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention & Tobacco Control Team.



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<p><b>This report addresses</b> the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Child Health, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse.</p>
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