



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2012 May 17

ONTARIO ENERGY DRINK WORK GROUP UPDATE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 078-12 Ontario Energy Drink Work Group Update for information.

Background

Report No. 107-11 re Energy Drinks: Health, Safety and Regulation was submitted for the November 2011 Middlesex-London Board of Health meeting. At this meeting the Board approved the action item to endorse the recommendations of the Ontario Energy Drink Work Group (OEDWG) that were submitted to Health Canada regarding their Proposed Approach to Managing Caffeinated Energy Drinks. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the OEDWG's activities, in particular the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) resolution submitted for the 2012 Annual Meeting.

The OEDWG, co-chaired by staff from the Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention (HCIP) and Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control (CDPTC) teams, was formed in the summer of 2011. Current membership includes Public Health Nurses, Health Promoters, and Registered Dietitians from 20 Ontario health units and related organizations across Ontario. 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.

Fitness Facilities Advocacy

In early 2012, it came to the attention of the OEDWG that some Ontario fitness facilities, including locations in Middlesex-London, were selling energy drinks at their clubs. This practice is concerning given that energy drinks are not recommended during or after exercise, and many consumers confuse the purpose and use of sports drinks and energy drinks. In March 2012, the OEDWG sent advocacy letters to the head offices of these fitness facilities to encourage them to discontinue the sale of energy drinks at their clubs. The OEDWG has yet to receive a response and is following up.

Resource Development

A segment of the OEDWG is beginning collaboration on education materials for parents. The goals of the resources are to increase parental awareness regarding energy drinks, including consumption patterns in youth, risks associated with this practice, and misperceptions regarding energy drinks. These centrally produced resources with consistent messaging will be disseminated to parents via fact sheets, websites, and school newsletter inserts.

Health Unit OEDWG members are liaising with the Youth Engagement Co-ordinator and Youth Leaders (YL) to plan, develop, and create relevant peer-to-peer messaging regarding energy drinks and risks associated with their consumption. A backgrounder with evidence-based facts was created for the YL to

help inform the creation of the peer-to-peer resources. The YL have indicated their interest in producing short video vignettes to message to their peers.

alPHa Resolution

Given the need to create a supportive environment related to energy drinks and legislation to impact behaviour, the OEDWG drafted an energy drink alPHa resolution for the 2012 Annual General Meeting ([Appendix A](#)). The resolution supports the recommendations the OEDWG proposed in 2011. Health Canada has yet to release the results of the stakeholder feedback or their official approach to managing energy drinks. It is therefore a strategic time to advocate for regulation change related to energy drinks. The resolution was reviewed and submitted by the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH), an affiliate organization of alPHa. The operative clauses are as follows:

1. alPHa strongly recommend and urgently request Health Canada and the Province of Ontario prohibit the advertising and sale of energy drinks to children and adolescents.
2. alPHa strongly recommend and urgently request Health Canada require the addition of a warning label to energy drink packaging that states: "Energy drinks are not recommended for use during exercise or to rehydrate following exercise." The space allocated for warning labels should be at least 25% of the total packaging.
3. alPHa strongly recommend and urgently request the Province of Ontario prohibit the sale of all pre-mixed caffeinated-alcoholic beverages at Provincial Liquor Outlets or at a minimum require the addition of a warning label to all pre-mixed caffeinated-alcoholic beverages packaging that states: "This product contains alcohol and caffeine. Consuming alcohol and caffeine together may increase your risk of injury."
4. alPHa strongly recommend and urgently request the Province of Ontario to prohibit the sale of energy drinks at all locations where alcohol is sold.

Next Steps

In June 2012, Ms. Melissa Rennison, Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Kim Leacy, Public Health Dietitian, co-chairs of the OEDWG, will be presenting the Energy Drink alPHa Resolution at the Annual General Meeting on behalf of OSNPPH and the OEDWG. The OEDWG is hopeful that Medical Officers of Health across Ontario will support the resolution as Health Canada is currently in the process of revising energy drink regulations.

The OEDWG continues to wait for Health Canada's official energy drink approach to help direct and inform future work. Local and provincial consumer education, via youth and families, will continue to enhance the public's ability to make informed and safe choices, thereby reducing overall harm.

This report was prepared by Ms. Melissa Rennison, Public Health Nurse, HCIP Team, Ms. Christine Callaghan, Public Health Dietitian, Young Adult Team, and Ms. Kim Leacy, Public Health Dietitian, CDPTC Team.

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