

**From:** Hamilton, Amanda (HC/SC) <[amanda.hamilton@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:amanda.hamilton@hc-sc.gc.ca)> **On Behalf Of** CSD DGO / BDG DSC (HC/SC)

**Sent:** Monday, June 20, 2022 8:50 AM

**To:** Timothy Naimi <[tnaimi@uvic.ca](mailto:tnaimi@uvic.ca)>

**Subject:** RE: Public interest in warning labels, calorie information, and number of standard drinks being required on alcohol containers sold in Canada

Dear Dr. Naimi and co-signatories,

Thank you for your correspondence of March 10, 2022 addressed to the Minister of Health, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett regarding interest in warning labels, calorie information, and number of standard drinks being required on alcohol containers sold in Canada. I have been asked to respond to you directly.

Health Canada recognizes that alcohol use presents a serious public health and safety issue that affects individuals and communities across Canada. Our actions to address alcohol-related harms are guided by the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS), which takes a public-health approach to reduce the harms associated with substance use in Canada.

As you are aware, since you and a number of your letter's signatories are on the committees to update Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines (LRDGs), Health Canada is currently funding the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction to update Canada's [Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines](#) by Fall 2022. This initiative will modernize the guidelines, based on the latest research, to provide Canadians with the most accurate and up-to-date advice on lower-risk alcohol use. We thank you for your efforts and participation in this important endeavour.

In addition, we acknowledge the research that Dr. Tim Stockwell and others completed on the Yukon labelling study, including the legal analysis. This has been valuable information that we continue to use to inform our work moving forward.

As for nutrition information on alcoholic beverages, these products are exempted from the regulatory requirements for food to carry a Nutrition Facts table (NFt), as it was determined that making decisions about consuming alcohol were complex and alcohol should not be associated with positive nutritional benefits. However, an NFt becomes mandatory when the product label carries a voluntary nutrient content claim, such as "low in calories". It may also be seen on an alcoholic beverage when a manufacturer chooses to voluntarily display one.

The Government of Canada is closely monitoring current trends in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms in Canada. We are also paying close attention to best practices and the evolving evidence to inform the best approaches to raise awareness among the public about alcohol-related harms. All of these sources of information will inform future federal actions to raise awareness among the population about alcohol-related health and social harms.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter, and sharing your valuable expertise in this area.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Saxe  
Director General  
Controlled Substances Directorate  
Controlled Substances and Cannabis Branch  
Health Canada