



Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation (CAPE) Community of Practice Event Series

Event Summary

CAPE Community of Practice Event #3: Alcohol Warning Labels: Informing Canadian Consumers, March 16, 2022

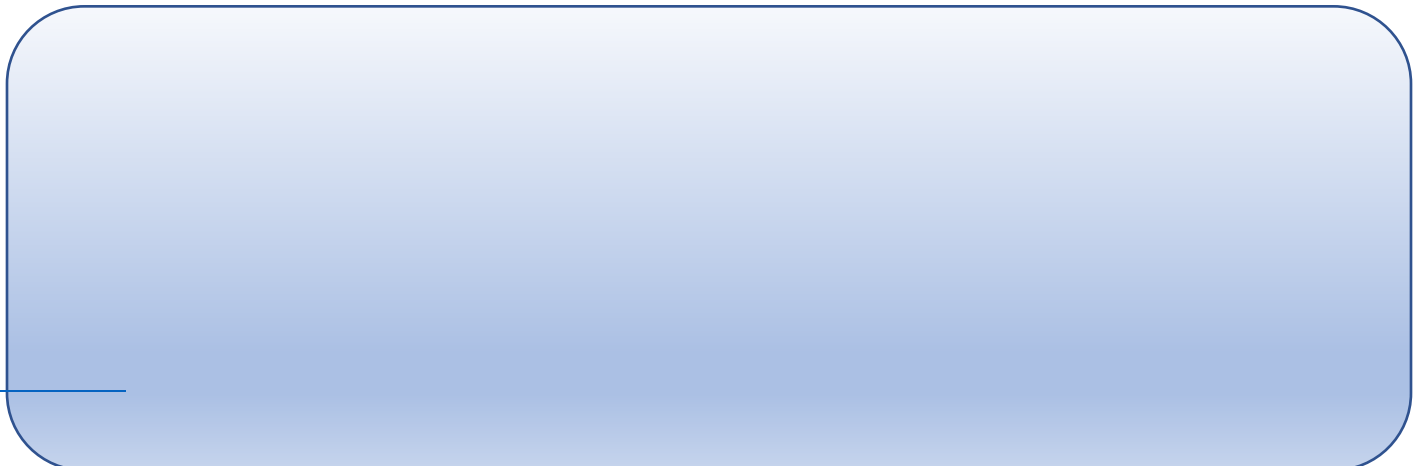
Presenters: *Dr. Norman Giesbrecht (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health), Dr. Thomas Gremillion (Consumer Federation of America), Dr. Erin Hobin (Public Health Ontario), Dr. Jacob Shelley (Western University), Prof. Robert Solomon (Western University)*

Thank you to all the community of practice members who attended the CAPE Community of Practice's second live webinar event on March 16, 2022. We had another strong turnout and were pleased to see a wide range of interest in alcohol warning labels from members across Canada. Before the event got underway, we took a moment to honour our friend and colleague, Harold Johnson, who passed away on February 9, 2022. Harold was a storyteller, writer, elder, and a strong advocate for social justice and effective alcohol policies. He continues to be an inspiration to all of us.

Below you will find a summary of the webinar presentation. The summary includes an overview of alcohol warning labels, alcohol labels in the US context, and a two-part presentation about Canadian constitutional authority and civil liability. Corresponding slide numbers from the PowerPoint presentation are listed for each section of the summary.

Based on input from members who attended the alcohol warning labels webinar, our next CAPE community of practice event will be a follow-up roundtable event on **March 30, 2022**. This roundtable session will provide a more in-depth exploration of the legal issues and considerations around implementation of warning labels in Canadian jurisdictions.

Visit the [CAPE project page](#) for more details and to [register for the event](#). Please note that this event will once again be open to CAPE commgallAG1 (d) # 4 S 0 6 3 1 q b G r 5 Z g r 5 4 p f w / G r 4 W d E (p)-0.7(e)-h (t)4.9 (o)-r.6 (94MCID 9 >>BDC 0 g0 Tc 013Tw 7





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International examples of mandated alcohol labels (slides 17-20)

- US mandated health-



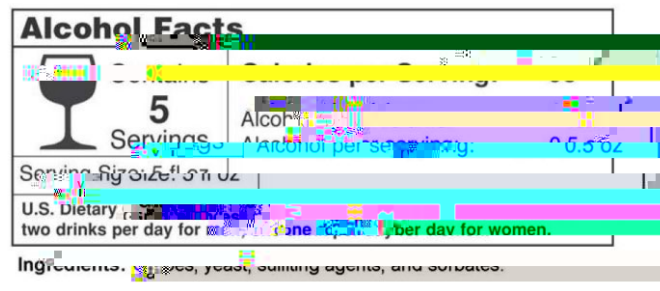
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- California enlisted alcohol as a carcinogen, but state does not require labelling to be on the container and instead there is a requirement to have a warning statement at the point of sale.

Consumer group advocacy on alcohol: recent history (slides 29-34)

- To bring alcohol to conform with other food and beverage product requirements, a 2003 petition was submitted asking for an update. This update was to add standard serving size, alcohol by volume, calories, ingredients, and a statement on moderate drinking guidelines.

Proposed new labelling rules (slide 29)



- Comments from industry caused a push back against the new requirements. Industry claimed that the consumer did not care about nutritional labelling on alcoholic products. However, a Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) poll of consumers found overwhelming support for nutritional labelling. This sentiment was furthered by media attention and consumer interest in a CFA publication of the nutritional information in 28 of the most popular alcoholic beverages in the US.
- In the years since, progress has been made in the implementation of alcohol labelling requirements. In 2010, calories in menu items (including alcoholic beverages) were required to be disclosed. This has been shown to have a significant impact on lowering alcohol use. In 2013, a TTB ruling allowed for voluntary placement of Serving Facts labels on alcohol products. This ruling had been aided by support of the spirits industry.



Figure 1. Voluntary Serving Facts label on Cans of Bud Light and Coors Light

Some voluntary labelling seen on non-spirit beverages is difficult to read, presented as a continuous block of text with abbreviated terms for nutritional info (cal, carb) (slide 34).

Efforts to implement a cancer warning label on alcohol products in the US (slides 35-40)

- While some may argue that including cancer warning labels on alcohol products is unnecessary, the argument for their implementation can be made with two numbers: 3 and ½



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- Alcohol is the **third** largest overall contributor to invasive cancer cases and deaths in the US. 2014 estimates from cancer research agencies claim alcohol contribution to 6.4% of all cancer cases in women and 4.8% in men. Over 20,000 deaths per year contributable to alcohol use.
- And according to survey data, **less than half** of people appreciate the significant link between alcohol and cancer. There is a widespread lack of awareness amongst the US population.
- This gap between awareness of alcohol as a cancer risk factor and the actual contribution of alcohol to the cancer burden called advocacy groups to push for an update to the health and warning statement on alcoholic beverages.
- A 2020 consumer group petition asked TTB to report to congress when an update to the alcohol warning statement is called for and recommended based on scientific consensus the need for a cancer warning statement like the one originated in the Yukon study.

First amendment concerns (slides 41 & 42)

- There is no first amendment concern with the alcohol warning labels recommended by advocacy groups

3. Alcohol, Health Labels, Manufacturers' Duty to Inform, and Canadian Law (see slides 47-59 [in the PowerPoint deck](#)) (A separate highlights summary of this presentation is also available [here](#))

Speaker *Prof. Robert Solomon* provided an overview of the legislation for requiring alcohol manufacturers and suppliers to attach warning labels to alcohol containers and the duty to inform consumers on the wide range of injuries and illnesses associated with both moderate and heavy use of alcohol.

Part I: Government Mandated Alcohol Labels: The Constitution and the Canadian *Charter*

- The federal government could enact legislation mandating the inclusion of alcohol labels under several different heads of power. To be a valid criminal law, the legislation would have to take the form of a prohibition, coupled

