



Reducing Alcohol Related Harms and Costs in New Brunswick

A Provincial Summary Report

Recent Developments in Alcohol Policy in New Brunswick (since November, 2012).

There have been no developments in alcohol policy and practices that have taken place, been announced, or been brought to the team's attention in New Brunswick since the end of the data collection period of the main report in Fall 2012 other than MADD Canada's report that New

Brunswick has increased the short-term **Administrative License Suspension (ALS)** c3002600441 607.6ao 7 dic

comparison between New Brunswick's score on each of the policy dimensions compared to the national average score (across the 10 provinces) for each policy dimension.

The following is a detailed review of the results for New Brunswick and includes New Brunswick specific policy recommendations. It should be noted that the policy dimensions listed below are listed in order of their level of effectiveness and population reach i.e. the policies are listed in the order in which they are likely to have the most impact on reducing alcohol related harms and costs.

1. Pricing

Promising Practices: New Brunswick has minimum prices for beer, wine and spirits sold from off-premise retail outlets and on-premise licensed establishments. Also, the average price of alcohol sold from off-premise outlets in New Brunswick has been keeping pace with inflation over recent years. These practices help ensure that t

Recommendations: As one of the most potent policy levers to reduce alcohol-related harm, there are a number of steps that might be taken. New Brunswick is encouraged to set regulations in three areas. First, they should set indexed minimum pricing for both on-premise and off-premise sales, and at levels that are substantially higher than what currently is charged for non-alcoholic beverage of the same volume. Specifically, the project team recommends that minimum prices be set at a minimum of \$1.50 per standard drink for alcohol sold from off-premise retail outlets and \$3.00 per standard drink for alcohol sold from on-premise licensed establishments outlets. Prices from all channels, including online sales, and ferment on premise outlets should be in line with minimum price regulations. Furthermore, New Brunswick's alcohol prices have been keeping pace with inflation; all prices should be automatically indexed to inflation to ensure this trend continues. Finally, adjusting beverage prices to reflect alcohol content so that the price per standard drink remains stable across products of different strengths will prevent incentives for consumers to choose higher alcohol content beverages.

2. Alcohol Control System:

Promising Practices: New Brunswick has maintained approximately a 30% government run alcohol retail monopoly of off-premise retail outlets. A government-controlled alcohol monopoly is important for regulating access to alcohol, as it creates a climate that facilitates the enforcement of many other policies (e.g. legal drinking age, hours of operation, days of sale, density) New Brunswick disseminates social responsibility messages through a variety of mediums including online content, corporate websites and social media, print materials, TV and radio advertisements, workshops and more. Additionally in New Brunswick, alcohol control is overseen by the Ministry of Public safety and Solicitor General which allows alcohol control to be framed within a public health context when revenue generating targets are being set for alcohol sales.

Areas for Improvement: New Brunswick allows for the sale of alcohol through various channels beyond on-premise and off-premise outlets, such as ferment at home kits and ferment on the premises (FOP) outlets. There also remains extensive manufacturer sponsored product promotion initiatives that make use of Alcool NB Liquor (ANBL) logos and branding.

Recommendations: As a province with a mixed retail system, New Brunswick is encouraged to maintain the government run monopoly by placing a moratorium on private outlets including agency stores and Ferment on Premise outlets. There should be sufficient oversight to curtail sales to minors or intoxicated customers in these systems. Furthermore, with regard to the dual roles of liquor boards, marketing and retailing agendas appear to overshadow control functions. This over-emphasis should be addressed in order to more effectively reduce alcohol-related costs to government.

3. Physical Availability:

Promising Practices: Local by-laws in New Brunswick provide power

6. Legal Drinking Age

Promising Practices: The minimum legal drinking age in New Brunswick, which is 19 years of

Brunswick is not based on evaluated training interventions shown to reduce over-service or service to individuals below the legal drinking age. Moreover, challenge and refusals are not consistently tracked amongst private alcohol retailers.

Recommendations: For on-premise sales, New Brunswick is encouraged to implement province wide mandatory server training for staff at all licensed events and venues. It is recommended that the province implement programs that have been shown through evaluation to reduce over-service or service to minors and implement tracking of challenges and refusals in all outlet types. For off-premise sales, New Brunswick is encouraged to strengthen its program by having ongoing training of staff and comprehensive challenge criteria that include people suspected of attempting to purchase alcohol for either minors or intoxicated individuals.

9. Provincial Alcohol Strategy

Promising Practices: There is no focused provincial alcohol strategy in New Brunswick, although its Mental Health strategy mentions alcohol as being co-morbid with mental health issues.

Areas for Improvement: New Brunswick's mental health strategy does not identify alcohol as a priority area for action and does not include specific alcohol-oriented interventions or policies.

Recommendations: As New Brunswick does not have a specific provincial alcohol policy, the project team recommends that they develop a strategy that includes alcohol focused policy and interventions recommended by the World Health Organization (2010). Nova Scotia has a provincial alcohol strategy, New Brunswick might also consider using this as a resource in developing an alcohol strategy specific to New Brunswick..

10. Warning Labels and Signs

Areas for Improvement: There is much unrealised potential in terms of informing consumers of the risks associated with alcohol use by implementing packaging labels and point of sale messaging. New Brunswick has not implemented regulated warning labels on alcohol containers and/or packages, nor, other than the risks associated with alcohol use during pregnancy, made reference to the risks related to drinking and driving, chronic diseases associated with alcohol use in their warning messages.

Recommendations: There have been several attempts to introduce warning labels in Canada. The public should be made aware of the risks of alcohol use in the most direct ways possible; a label on the beverage container which conveys a clear health message is one way this may be accomplished. New Brunswick is encouraged to have mandatory warning signs on alcohol packaging as well as in both on-premise and off-premise venues. These messages should focus on a range of health related themes, highlighting different alcohol problems. Messaging should be clear, visible and concise. For example, vague 'please drink responsibly' messages should be replaced with expanded text offering concrete advice on daily and weekly drinking limits, as well as specific advice on how the drinker can achieve more responsible levels of alcohol consumption.

costs associated with alcohol use and to enhance the health and safety of its residents. Refining and implementing the recommendations listed above will require an evidence-based perspective, leadership, commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm and a spirit of collaboration among key stakeholders including various ministries and sectors of government, NGOs working on health issues, public health advocates and representatives from the private sector. As an immediate next step, New Brunswick is strongly urged to place a moratorium on the further expansion of liquidation outlets. Alcohol pricing policies are one of the most potent policy levers to reduce alcohol-related harm and costs. It is important that the integrity of these policies is not compromised by the availability of deeply discounted products.

The province is further urged to consider the public health implications associated with the loosening of these controls and is urged to gather input from key stakeholders committed to reducing the harm from alcohol and conduct pilot evaluations of initiatives prior to implementing them on a province wide basis. Finally, a provincial alcohol strategy would identify alcohol as a priority issue in the province of New Brunswick and would serve to guide future alcohol policy developments.

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