

15 May 2026

Via Email

Senator Rosemary Moodie
Chair, Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology

Dear Senator Moodie:

In Support of Alcohol Labelling Policy (Bill S-202)

On behalf of the Board of Health of Algoma Public Health (APH), please accept this correspondence informing the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology of the Board's support for mandatory alcohol container health warning labels on all alcohol containers sold in Canada, endorsing communications from Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) re: Bill S-202.

Alcohol continues to be a leading risk factor for disease and injury in Canada, responsible for over 17,000 deaths and nearly 120,000 hospitalizations annually⁽¹⁾. The social and economic implications of alcohol are also substantial, costing Canadians \$19.7 billion/year⁽¹⁾, more than the societal costs of tobacco and opioids combined. Tobacco and non-medical cannabis products in Canada are required to display standardized labels that include health warnings and product information designed to inform consumers about associated health risks; labels support health equity in that they can reach all consumers regardless of education, income, or geographical location⁽²⁾.

Many Canadians are unaware of the causal relationship between alcohol consumption, even at low levels, and cancer risk⁽³⁾. Many Canadians are also unaware of the information contained in Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health regarding reducing alcohol risk, which involves awareness of standard alcoholic drink measurements.

Alcohol health warning labels are an effective tool to help consumers understand product risk^(1, 2). Bill S-202 proposes an amendment to the *Food and Drugs Act*, mandating alcohol warning labels that indicate the volume constituting a standard drink, detail the number of standard drinks in the beverage container, and display health messages regarding the relationship between the number of standard drinks consumed and health outcomes⁽⁴⁾.

The last decade has seen the expansion of alcohol sales to grocery and convenience stores in Ontario. This has increased the exposure of alcohol product promotion to children and youth⁽⁵⁾. Alcohol labelling has the potential to reach children and youth with messages that will counter

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industry-based advertising, and to provide an opportunity for meaningful conversations between parents and their children regarding alcohol-related health harms.

The Board of Health for APH has historically supported public health policy measures intended to mitigate alcohol-related health harms, including supporting Bill S-254 in April 2023. Alcohol-related harms in Algoma exceed provincial averages and health guidelines; more than half of Algoma adults aged 19 or older exceed drinking guidelines, and the prevalence of heavy drinkers in Algoma is 6% higher than the provincial prevalence (21.2% and 16%, respectively⁽⁶⁾). Alcohol labelling is an effective tool to target those exceeding drinking guidelines, as messaging is available at point of pour.

At its meeting on April 22, 2026, the Algoma Board of Health passed the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Board of Health for the District of Algoma Health Unit endorse MLHU's report and associated content (included in this summary report), recommending alcohol labelling for all alcohol manufactured or sold in Canada with:

- 1. Health Warnings: prominent, rotating warnings on all alcohol containers.**
- 2. Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: providing guidance for preventing or reducing consumption-related health risks.**
- 3. Standard Drink Size: static standard drink information per container and per serving.**

Algoma Public Health remains committed to preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms and will continue communicating with the communities we serve to increase awareness for the health risks associated with alcohol consumption.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Trivers
Chair, Board of Health,
District of Algoma Health Unit

cc: All Ontario Boards of Health
MP Terry Sheehan, Sault Ste. Marie-Algoma

References

1. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research. Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms. 2026.
2. Hobin E, Bains A, Poon T, Forbes S, Hammond D, Naimi T, et al. Testing Alcohol Container Warning Labels Among Alcohol Consumers in the Field Over a 4-Week Period: A Protocol for a Randomized Field Trial. *J Stud Alcohol Drugs*. 2025;86(4):571–81.
3. Government of Canada. Public Awareness of Alcohol-related Harms Survey. 2023.
4. Opening Remarks by Ian Culbert, Executive Director, Canadian Public Health Association, to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology regarding Bill S-202 – An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning labels on alcoholic beverages) [press release]. Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association, October 22 2025.
5. Friesen EL, Staykov E, Myran DT. Understanding the association between neighbourhood socioeconomic status and grocery store alcohol sales following market liberalization in Ontario, Canada. *Can J Public Health*. 2023;114(2):254–63.
6. Algoma Public Health. Algoma's Community Health Profile. 2024 September 18.