



June 14, 2011

The Honourable Margaret R. Best
Minister – Minister's Office
Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5

Dear Minister Best:

Subject: Energy Drinks

On May 25, 2011, the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit passed a resolution endorsing the advocacy work of the Sudbury and District Health Unit related to energy drinks. Specifically, the Board supports asking that restrictions be placed on the advertisement and sale of energy drinks to children and youth in municipal and provincial jurisdictions, and the sale of premixed alcohol and energy drinks in liquor stores.

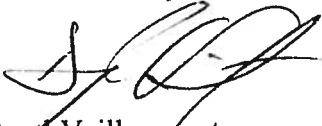
Energy Drinks are a significant public health concern for a number of reasons. Because they are regulated as Natural Health Products¹, they do not require a nutrition facts table which makes it impossible to determine their nutritional value. Energy drinks appeal to children and youth because they are sweet like soft drinks. Although they contain approximately the same amount of sugar as soft drinks when an equal volume is compared, the issue lies with the significant caffeine content in these products. In addition, the caffeine-like effects of the herbal supplements added in these products is not well understood², and is not necessarily captured in the caffeine content listed. Children and youth consuming just one energy drink could easily exceed the maximum amount of caffeine for their age. Common side effects of excess caffeine intake include anxiety, inattentiveness, increased blood pressure or heart rate, irritability, headache, muscle tremors, sleeping difficulties, and/or nausea.^{3,4} Health Canada states that children are at an increased risk for possible behavioral effects from caffeine.³

Children and youth are heavily targeted by energy drink companies through advertising using sports, professional athletes and sporting events. In addition, energy drinks are often marketed as sports drinks, which are not the same thing. Sports drinks are designed to hydrate the user and replenish electrolytes during periods of intense physical activity, whereas energy drinks are carbonated, which can lead to bloating if consumed during exercise. They also contain too much sugar to be absorbed effectively during activity. In October 2010, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published an editorial about energy drink consumption in children and youth, requesting that advertising of energy drinks to children and youth be prohibited.⁵ Currently, there are no regulations in place to prohibit the advertisement or sale of energy drinks to children and youth.²

Lastly, Health Canada currently advises consumers not to mix alcohol and energy drinks¹. Large amounts of caffeine present in energy drinks can mask the symptoms of intoxication when energy drinks are mixed with alcohol, often leading to over drinking and dehydration. This may then lead to alcohol toxicity, impaired driving, sexual assault incidents, injuries and even death.^{2,4,5,6} Energy drinks mixed with alcohol are not approved by Health Canada. However, energy drinks premixed with alcohol continue to be sold in the LCBO.⁷

It is clear that energy drinks pose a significant public health challenge, particularly with children and youth. Please consider our Board of Health resolution based on the issues related to energy drinks presented within this letter. Thank you for taking the time to review our recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Daryl Vaillancourt
Board of Health Chairperson
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

Enclosure (1)

Copy to: Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Ontario Boards of Health
Monique Lugli, Executive Director, Community Services, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
Brenda Marshall, Manager, Healthy Living Team, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
Erin Reyce, Public Health Dietitian, Healthy Living Team, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

References

1. Health Canada. It's Your Health: Safe Use of Energy Drinks. 2010
2. Seifert SM, Schaechter JL, Hershorin ER, Lipshultz SE. Health Effects of Energy Drinks on Children, Adolescents and Young Adults. *Pediatrics*. 2011;127(3): 511-528
3. Health Canada. It's Your Health: Caffeine. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/pdf/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/caffeine-eng.pdf
4. Arria AM, O'Brien MC. The "High" Risk of Energy Drinks. *JAMA*. 2011;305(6):600-601
5. MacDonald N, Stanbrook M, Hebert P. "Caffeinating" Children and Youth. *CMAJ*. 2010
6. Reissig CJ, Strain EC, Griffiths RR. Caffeinated Energy Drinks: A Growing Problem. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2009;99(1-3):1-10
7. Health Canada Media Release. Alcoholic Energy Drinks Not Approved By Health Canada. May 21, 2010. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/fr-ati/2010/2010_83-eng.php

**NORTH BAY PARRY SOUND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT
BOARD OF HEALTH**

RESOLUTION

DATE: May 25, 2011

MOVED BY: MIKE POETA

RESOLUTION # BOH/2011/05/09

SECONDED BY: WENDY ADAMS

Be It Resolved, That the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit endorse the resolution passed by the Sudbry District Health Unit on March 10, 2011, requesting that the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care place restrictions on the:

- a) advertisement and sale of energy drinks to youth and children in municipal and provincial jurisdictions; and*
- b) sale of premixed alcohol and energy drink beverages in liquor stores, and*

Furthermore Be It Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Ontario Boards of Health.

CARRIED: ✓

DEFEATED: _____

AS AMENDED: _____

CHAIRPERSON: [Signature]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED AND SEAT(S) VACATED:

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RECORDED VOTE:

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Against:

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June 14, 2011

The Honourable Deb Matthews
Minister – Minister's Office
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Matthews:

Subject: Energy Drinks

On May 25, 2011, the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit passed a resolution endorsing the advocacy work of the Sudbury and District Health Unit related to energy drinks. Specifically, the Board supports asking that restrictions be placed on the advertisement and sale of energy drinks to children and youth in municipal and provincial jurisdictions, and the sale of premixed alcohol and energy drinks in liquor stores.

Energy Drinks are a significant public health concern for a number of reasons. Because they are regulated as Natural Health Products¹, they do not require a nutrition facts table which makes it impossible to determine their nutritional value. Energy drinks appeal to children and youth because they are sweet like soft drinks. Although they contain approximately the same amount of sugar as soft drinks when an equal volume is compared, the issue lies with the significant caffeine content in these products. In addition, the caffeine-like effects of the herbal supplements added in these products is not well understood², and is not necessarily captured in the caffeine content listed. Children and youth consuming just one energy drink could easily exceed the maximum amount of caffeine for their age. Common side effects of excess caffeine intake include anxiety, inattentiveness, increased blood pressure or heart rate, irritability, headache, muscle tremors, sleeping difficulties, and/or nausea.^{3,4} Health Canada states that children are at an increased risk for possible behavioral effects from caffeine.³

Children and youth are heavily targeted by energy drink companies through advertising using sports, professional athletes and sporting events. In addition, energy drinks are often marketed as sports drinks, which are not the same thing. Sports drinks are designed to hydrate the user and replenish electrolytes during periods of intense physical activity, whereas energy drinks are carbonated, which can lead to bloating if consumed during exercise. They also contain too much sugar to be absorbed effectively during activity. In October 2010, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published an editorial about energy drink consumption in children and youth, requesting that advertising of energy drinks to children and youth be prohibited.⁵ Currently, there are no regulations in place to prohibit the advertisement or sale of energy drinks to children and youth.²

Lastly, Health Canada currently advises consumers not to mix alcohol and energy drinks¹. Large amounts of caffeine present in energy drinks can mask the symptoms of intoxication when energy drinks are mixed with alcohol, often leading to over drinking and dehydration. This may then lead to alcohol toxicity, impaired driving, sexual assault incidents, injuries and even death.^{2,4,5,6} Energy drinks mixed with alcohol are not approved by Health Canada. However, energy drinks premixed with alcohol continue to be sold in the LCBO.⁷

It is clear that energy drinks pose a significant public health challenge, particularly with children and youth. Please consider our Board of Health resolution based on the issues related to energy drinks presented within this letter. Thank you for taking the time to review our recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Daryl Vaillancourt
Board of Health Chairperson
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

Enclosure (1)

Copy to: Honourable Margaret R. Best, Minister of Health Promotion and Sport
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**NORTH BAY PARRY SOUND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT
BOARD OF HEALTH**

RESOLUTION

DATE: May 25, 2011 MOVED BY: MIKE POETA

RESOLUTION # BOH/2011/05/09 SECONDED BY: WENDY ADAMS

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- a) advertisement and sale of energy drinks to youth and children in municipal and provincial jurisdictions; and*
- b) sale of premixed alcohol and energy drink beverages in liquor stores, and*

Furthermore Be It Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Ontario Boards of Health.

CARRIED: ✓ DEFEATED: _____

AS AMENDED: _____ CHAIRPERSON: [Signature]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED AND SEAT(S) VACATED:

RECORDED VOTE:

- For:
- 1. _____
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- Against:
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