

Montreal, March 14, 2017

Toronto Board of Health
10th floor – West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto (Ontario) M5H 2N2

Object: Support letter for your initiative to better regulate the sale of energy drinks

Members of the Board of Health,

We would like to congratulate you for your initiative to better regulate the sale of energy drinks among young people and offer our support. As a Coalition, we are working hard to obtain the required engagement in making demands for changing legislation, regulations and public policies in order to encourage the development of environments favourable to healthy choices that contribute to preventing weight-related issues. It is very promising to see that the Board of Health has already recognized the risks to children and youth from energy drinks consumption. Therefore we back action to move forward and ban the sale, marketing and sampling of these drinks in all the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation properties. 80 Quebec municipalities have already banned the sale of energy drinks on municipal properties.

Risk for the health

As you have acknowledged, the popularity of energy drinks and their impact on health is a real problem for which we must act quickly. In addition to their large amount of sugar and the risk of dental erosion due to their acidity, the growing consumption of energy drinks is of great concern to health and youth workers, because the amount of caffeine they contain represents a potential danger for children and adolescents. Depending on the weight of the child, a single can of energy drinks may contain more caffeine than the maximum daily intake recommended for him or her.

Excessive caffeine can lead to consequences such as tachycardia, palpitations, insomnia, agitation, nervousness, tremors, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Despite the warning on the cans, that mention that these beverages are not recommended to children, various surveys suggest that many children in primary and secondary school consume them. Energy drinks are also the subject of an intense marketing which targets especially the young people and contributes to the power of attraction of these products to this clientele.

Sugary drinks and obesity

Energy drinks are also very sweet drinks, some of them containing up to 16 teaspoons of sugar in a single can. It is largely scientifically demonstrated that sugary drinks contribute to obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and tooth decay. Consumption of one sweetened beverage per day increases by

60% the risk of obesity among children. Obesity has serious consequences for our health, quality of life and economy. Sugary drinks are distinguished from other low-nutritional foods, for being liquid candy. In fact, it is the main source of sugar among young people.

Since over-consumption of sweetened beverages, including energy drinks, is one of our priorities, we are more than happy to see you, Board of Health, taking action to reduce the attractiveness of these beverages and to offer you our support for all actions that can help reduce the attractiveness of these drinks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Corinne Voyer." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Corinne Voyer
Director
Quebec Coalition on Weight-Related Problems