

Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition

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For Immediate Release

**New Octagonal Warning Labels Save Lives Campaign launched to call for Policy
Protecting Barbadians' Right to Health**

As the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados ramps up its advocacy efforts to encourage government to introduce a Front-of-Package Labeling (FOWPL) Policy, The Octagonal Warning Labels Save Lives Mass Media Campaign was launched on World Obesity Day. 75% of Barbadians support the introduction of FOPWL and Octagonal Warning Labels which show what a food product is "HIGH IN" Sodium, Sugar or Fats is the best performing system to identify unhealthy foods quickly, easily, and correctly. "

Interim CEO of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados, Greta Yearwood, said *"This new campaign takes our lobbying efforts for Octagonal Front of Package Warning Labels to new heights, to address the concerning number of Barbadians battling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and children who are overweight/obese. Many of us take for granted the importance of warning signs that have become so integral in our daily lives, as they protect us from danger, and ultimately save lives. It was critical for us to not only show what happens without warning signs, but emphasize that despite garnering support by 75% of Barbadians, we still have no such warnings for ultra-processed food products. We are confident that the campaign will drive home the message that the implementation of Octagonal Warning Labels is the next step to protect our right to health, following the existing policies implemented as prescribed by the World Health Organization."*

Barbados continues to battle the grasp of non-communicable diseases; 80% of deaths are caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs), 31% of children being overweight/obese, and 1 in 5 adult Barbadians has diabetes. Now more than ever is the time to continue the work started to tackle NCDs with the implementation of Front of Package Warning Labels. Barbados has made significant strides in protecting Barbadians' Right to Health, with a 20% Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax as of 2022 and the implementation of the National School Nutrition Policy in 2023. However, the World Health Organization names Front of Package Warning Labels as a key policy, to regulate ultra-processed food products. These ultra-processed food products that are high in sodium, sugar, and saturated fat or trans-fat can increase the risk of obesity, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

Scientific evidence proves that Octagonal Warning Labels on the front of food packages indicating if a product is "HIGH IN" certain nutrients, is the best performing system for consumers to identify unhealthy foods quickly, easily, and correctly. This goes in tandem with the modern shopper, who spends less than 10 seconds selecting food products, which is not enough time to review the current, complex back-of-the-pack nutrition labels. By showing what nutrients a product is "HIGH IN," the labels are clear, easy to understand and essential to decision making on what's in our food.

“**Octagonal Warning Labels Save Lives**” was launched in collaboration with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR), and the Barbados Childhood Obesity



Prevention Coalition. This follows the “Give Us Warning Labels” launched in October 2023 to further position Octagonal Warning Labels as vital nutrition warning systems, by underscoring the often overlooked fact that warning signs are a part of every aspect of our lives, **except food**.

The campaign will be aired on broadcast, print and digital media in Barbados. Persons are encouraged to share messages about the campaign on social media using the hashtags: #WarningLabelsSaveLives, #OctagonalWarningLabelsforAll, #FactsforOurFuture, #LabelsLetUsLive, and #RighttoHealthyFoods #PeopleBeforeProfits #HealthyBarbados #UpFront. They can also like, comment, share or repost content from the Instagram and Facebook pages @hsfbarbados.

About the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. is a non-profit organization registered under the Companies Act 1982 of Barbados registration number 269 and under the Charities Act 1979-2 registration number 82. The Foundation was founded in 1985 as the Heart Foundation of Barbados and in 2006 embraced stroke to become the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados. Its Childhood Obesity Prevention (COP) Programme supports obesity prevention through mass media campaigns for increased awareness of the harms of sugary drinks and promotion of policy change.

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact the following persons:

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