



July 17, 2025

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, TD

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Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, TD

Minister for Health

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Dear Prime Minister, Dear Minister,

As Canada's first comprehensive national Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder research network, CanFASD works hard to produce and maintain collaborate research, addressing the complexities of FASD leading to prevention strategies and improved support services for people affected by FASD. We write to express our unequivocal support for Ireland's Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023. These landmark regulations – scheduled to take effect in May 2026 mandate that all alcoholic beverages sold in Ireland must display prominent health warnings, calorie and alcohol content, and direct consumers to trusted public health information.

As a specialist organization in FASD, CanFASD highlights the importance of unambiguous pregnancy-related warnings. Ireland mandates labels warning against drinking during pregnancy and offers a health website link. This aligns with our mission, preventing prenatal alcohol exposure and protecting future families. Current evidence demonstrates that alcohol warning labels significantly improve public awareness of associated harms, including cancer, liver disease, and prenatal risks, including FASD.

Ireland has a proud and proven track record of leading the way in impactful public health policy. In 2004, Ireland became the first country in the world to implement a comprehensive nationwide ban on smoking in enclosed workplaces, including pubs and restaurants. Despite early resistance, the policy quickly proved effective—reducing exposure to second-hand smoke, encouraging smoking cessation, and influencing countries worldwide to adopt similar measures. The success of Ireland’s smoking ban demonstrates how progressive, evidence-informed public health regulations can reshape societal norms and protect health on a global scale. The alcohol labelling regulations are a continuation of that same leadership legacy.

As Canada’s national authority on FASD, CanFASD strongly supports Ireland’s mandatory warning labels on the dangers of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Research shows that many people remain unaware of the risk’s alcohol poses to fetal development. Making this information more present on alcohol containers aligns with our commitment to prevention and supports the rights of individuals to make informed health decisions.

While opposition from industry interests has emerged, often citing trade or tradition, public health must remain paramount. History has shown, as with Ireland’s smoking ban, that when government leads with bold action based on evidence, the benefits far outweigh the early resistance.

In conclusion, CanFASD urges you to maintain full support for Ireland’s alcohol labelling regulations. These measures promise to reduce alcohol-related harm, including FASD, and reflect Ireland’s ongoing leadership in advancing global public health. We applaud Ireland’s principled stance and hope it will inspire others to follow suit.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this critical issue. Please reach out to CanFASD for further information or should you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Kathy Unsworth, MPH, MBA

Executive Director

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