



Ontario Public Health Association
 l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
 Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

44 Victoria St., Suite 502
 Toronto, ON M5C 1Y2

Tel: (416) 367-3313
 Fax: (416) 367-2844
 E-mail: admin@opha.on.ca
 www.opha.on.ca

President
 Ellen Wodchis
 E-mail: president@opha.on.ca

Executive Director
 Pegeen Walsh
 E-mail: PWalsh@opha.on.ca

Constituent Societies

Association of Ontario
 Health Centres (AOHC)

Association of Public Health
 Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO)

Association of Supervisors of
 Public Health Inspectors of Ontario
 (ASPHIO)

Canadian Institute of Public Health
 Inspectors (Ontario Branch) (CIPHIO)

Community Health Nurses'
 Initiatives Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario (HPO)

Ontario Association of Public
 Health Dentistry (OAPHD)

Ontario Society of Nutrition
 Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH)

The Ontario Association of Public Health
 Nursing Leaders, (OAPHNL)

Charitable Registration
 Number 11924 8771 RR0001

May 29, 2017

Hon Charles Sousa
 Ministry of Finance
 7th Floor, Frost Building South
 7 Queen's Park Crescent
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y7

Re: Product launch and promotion of Freedom 35 beer, featuring the Trailer Park Boys

Dear Minister Sousa,

The recent Toronto Star [article](#), which highlights the launch and promotion of the Trailer Park Boy's new product, Freedom 35 beer (hosted at the LCBO), has raised several concerns among the public health sector. As Co-Chair of the Ontario Public Health Association's Alcohol Work Group, I would like to share with you our observations and concerns and propose some needed actions.

Firstly, Ontario's [Liquor Advertising Guidelines](#) state that: "No well-known personality may be used in liquor advertising who may reasonably be expected to appeal...to persons under the legal drinking age...This may include...cultural figures as well as celebrities...". While hosting the Trailer Park Boys at the LCBO would appear to directly contravene this guideline, what is most concerning is the presence of young people, photographed on the premise, who attended this event in order to meet the celebrity cast.

Marketing for this specific campaign directly brought youth into the LCBO, a place where they were exposed to a proliferation of ads; a setting that glamorizes alcohol use without taking into serious consideration the health and societal consequences that arise from misuse (and regular use) of this substance.

Research has well established the link between alcohol promotion and the normalization of alcohol consumption, especially among youth.¹ Furthermore, exposure to alcohol marketing not only lowers the age of initiation, but it also increases the amount consumed by current drinkers.² Our role in public health is to work to minimize the societal harms associated with alcohol use and misuse, many of which include: chronic diseases, alcohol dependency syndrome, intentional and non-intentional injuries, violence, crime, enforcement costs, and youth initiation.³

Your continued commitment to responsible alcohol consumption is commended and appreciated, yet promotional events such as the one in

question, as well as the [October 2016 event](#), also featuring the Trailer Park Boys, continue to occur. We have raised our concerns with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission who are investigating the matter. We have also written to the LCBO and invited them to explore with us ways to promote responsible alcohol consumption.

We were pleased to learn of the Government's plan to develop and release a comprehensive Alcohol Policy framework; a pivotal guiding document for us and others, as we navigate the changing and complex provincial alcohol landscape. Beer, cider, and wine are expanding at a rapid rate into grocery stores, the LCBO now offers home delivery options, and wine is appearing at more Farmers' Markets each year. Additionally, alcohol marketing and promotions at events such as the April 27 launch of Freedom 35 beer, are further contributing to the normalization of alcohol use in our communities. Alcohol is a known carcinogen.³ It is also a psychoactive substance that is widely available for purchase.⁴ Undoubtedly, there is a lack of awareness about alcohol's full impact on health and society. It is not an ordinary commodity. We are disappointed that your government's Alcohol Policy has not yet been released. The need for a coordinated, socially responsible plan for managing alcohol sales, promotions, and harms, is well overdue. We urge the province to make this a priority.

We believe in a culture of moderation, and that this can be accomplished by working together and helping our communities become aware of risks associated with alcohol consumption. In addition to [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#), there are other ways in which we can engage our communities, and we would be happy to explore these ideas with you and your colleagues.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to connect with us for more information, or discussion about these important issues.

Sincerely,



Pegeen Walsh
Executive Director

cc: Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Eric Hoskins

1. Jernigan, D.H. The extent of global alcohol marketing and its impact on youth. *Contemporary Drug Problems* (2010); 37: 57-90.
2. Babor, T., Caetano, R., Casswell, S., Edwards, G., Giesbrecht, N., Grube, J., Hill, L., Holder, H., Homel, R., Livingstone, M., Österberg, E., Rehm, J., Room, R. and Rossow, I. *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity – research and public policy*, revised edition. (2010). Oxford: Oxford University Press
3. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2015). *The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2015: Alcohol Consumption in Canada*. Ottawa, ON.

About OPHA

Created in 1949, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that brings together a broad spectrum of groups and individuals concerned about people's health. OPHA's members come from various backgrounds and sectors— from the various disciplines in public health, health care, academic, non-profit to the private sector. They are united by OPHA's mission of providing leadership on issues affecting the public's health and strengthening the impact of people active in public and community health throughout Ontario. This mission is achieved through professional development, information and analysis on issues effecting community and public health, access to multidisciplinary networks, advocacy on health public policy and the provision of expertise and consultation.