A new public opinion survey conducted by the Heart Foundation of Jamaica and Vital Strategies found that Jamaicans are concerned about obesity-related non-communicable diseases like diabetes and heart disease and agree that a policy requiring clear front of package warning labels on unhealthy foods is necessary. The study was conducted in three survey waves, one prior to the “Are You Drinking Yourself Sick” mass media campaign launch in 2017, the second one immediately after the conclusion of the first two phases in 2018, and the third one after phases three and four of the campaign between April and July 2019. The surveys measured changes in public knowledge, attitudes, policy support and behaviors over time.

According to the World Health Organization, 78% of all deaths (nearly 4 in 5) in Jamaica are caused by Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Findings from the Global School-based Student Health Survey (2017) show that obesity is increasing for both boys and girls (13-15), almost doubling for boys.

Approximately two-thirds of Jamaicans are concerned about the harmful effects of unhealthy foods and drinks on their health and children’s health.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. More than half of the respondents agreed that it takes too much time to interpret the nutrition facts panel.
2. 82% of Jamaicans strongly agree on the policy requiring clear warning labels on the front of food and beverage packages to warn consumers when products are high in sugar, salt or fats as a way of reducing obesity in Jamaica.
3. 9 out of 10 Jamaicans support front-of-package warning labels on food and drinks as part of the government’s plan to promote a healthier diet in Jamaica.
4. 9 in 10 Jamaicans strongly agreed to support government efforts to increase children’s access to healthy foods and drinks.

REFERENCES: