

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor: Alcohol increases cancer risk. Regulate it as strongly as tobacco



Bottles of whiskey are seen at a bar in Eagle, Colo, in 2018. (Jenny Kane / Associated Press)

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To the editor: As an advocate for protective public health policy, I applaud U.S. Surgeon Gen. Dr. Vivek Murthy's succinct advisory on cancer risk.

I want to emphasize the importance of overhauling the federal alcohol warning label. It was established a generation ago and does not adhere to any of the accepted gold standards of effective health communication, including:

- Clear and legible typeface.
- Colors and graphical elements.
- Revolving advisories to prevent "warning fatigue."

Moreover, the current statute prohibits states from requiring warning labels more strident, in content or form, than the federal one. This overrides the will of California voters as expressed in Proposition 65, and is why we see cancer warning stickers applied to flip-flops and flat-pack furniture, but never liquor bottles.

My group Alcohol Justice is calling on California's congressional delegation to spearhead legislation revising the federal warning label and removing preemption of stricter state requirements. This would not only provide life-saving information to our residents, but also advance the evidence-based public health practices on which California has long been a leader.

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