

Dr. Sam Zakhari's Testimony – November 28, 2017

Good Morning

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the Dietary Guidelines on beverage alcohol consumption. I am Dr. Sam Zakhari, Chief Scientist for the Distilled Spirits Council. Formerly, I worked over 26 years at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health.

I wish to emphasize the importance of maintaining in the Guidelines the current 2015 definition for moderate drinking. The 2015 Guidelines state that, "If alcohol is consumed, it should be in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men—and only by adults of legal drinking age." To follow these recommended limits, adults need to have a clear definition of a drink equivalent.

The 2015 Guidelines state that, "One alcoholic drink-equivalent is described as containing 14 g (0.6 fl oz) of pure alcohol." As a reference, the Guidelines describe one alcohol drink-equivalent as 12 fluid ounces of regular beer (5 percent alcohol), 5 fluid ounces of wine (12 percent alcohol), or 1.5 fluid ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits (40 percent alcohol).

Throughout the decades, the Department of Health and Human Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have integrated beverage alcohol consumption in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans including a definition of what constitutes a drink equivalent.

We urge that the 2020 Guidelines incorporate the potential benefits and risks of alcohol consumption as was the case in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

This information provides all adult of legal drinking age with a standalone Guideline about alcohol and health.

Thank you.