



Resolution 1: Regulation of E-Cigarettes and Vaping for Ontario Youth

Submitted by: Chantal Singh on behalf of the Pediatric Nurses Interest Group

Conflict of Interest: No known conflict of interest

WHEREAS vaping and e-cigarette use has been linked to lung damage, nicotine addiction, exposure to harmful chemicals, and altered brain development in youth.

WHEREAS from 2017 to 2018 a 74% increase in vaping was reported among those aged 16-19 years old in Canada.

WHEREAS vaping products and e-cigarettes are poorly regulated in Ontario, and marketing of vaping products directly target youth populations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario actively lobby the Ontario government to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, banning: 1) the sale of all flavoured vaping and e-cigarette products designed to appeal to youth; and 2) all advertisements that promote the use of vaping and e-cigarette products.

Background

In 2004, new products termed electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and vapes were introduced to the market as alternatives to smoking traditional cigarettes. E-cigarettes are “battery-operated devices that mimic the smoking experience using an inhalation and heating process that vaporizes fluid within the device.”³ While these products were initially banned from containing nicotine, in May 2018 Bill S-5 was passed, legalizing e-cigarettes with nicotine for use in Canada.³ Though e-cigarettes and vapes have been promoted as safe alternatives to traditional smoking and an effective method for smoking cessation, they are in fact “associated with increased frequency and intensity of subsequent smoking among youth and young adults.”⁴

Though research into the health effects of vaping and e-cigarette use is ongoing, emerging evidence suggests e-cigarettes and vaping products are associated with long term lung disease, nicotine addiction, and altered brain development as they expose users to harmful chemicals.² As of November 20, 2019, Health Canada identified 11 probable or severe cases of lung illness related to vaping in the country.⁵ In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared an outbreak of lung injury associated with e-cigarette and vaping use, with 2,290 cases of e-cigarette or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI) and 47 confirmed deaths.⁶

Prominent health organizations are urging both provincial and federal governments to take immediate action on the regulation of e-cigarettes and vapes. Though Ontario's government has made recent changes to protect youth by banning vaping advertisements from convenience stores and gas stations, additional amendments to the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* are required to address this public health crisis. Provinces such as British Columbia have already passed legislation to enforce plain packaging, a ban on all advertisements in areas accessible by youth, and a ban on the sale of flavours directly targeting youth⁷. Ontario currently lacks legislation to support these practices, yet it is essential for the province to do so in order to protect the health of children and youth.

References

¹ Government of Canada. (2019). *Risks of vaping*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html#a1>

² Canadian Cancer Society. (2019). *Study finds dramatic 74% increase in youth vaping in Canada*.

Retrieved from: <https://www.cancer.ca/en/about-us/for-media/media-releases/national/2019/youth-vaping/?region=qc>

³ Heart and Stroke Foundation. (2018). *E-cigarette use in Canada*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/position-statements/ecigarettesincanada.ashx?la=en&hash=8939FF52C37A5E11C551176982F2E4AC5D38D605>

⁴ Public Health Ontario. (2018). *Current evidence on e-cigarettes: a summary of potential impacts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/literature-review-ecigarettes.pdf?la=en>

⁵ Government of Canada. (2019). *Severe lung illness related to vaping*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/vaping-pulmonary-illness.html>

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Outbreak of lung injury associated with the use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products*. Retrieved from:

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

⁷ CBC News. (2019). *Sweeping new B.C. regulations on vape products include higher taxes, health warnings on packings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-new-vaping-policy-announcement-1.5359457>