



Northwestern Health Unit

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November 3, 2010

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Honourable Deb Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Honourable Margaret Best
Minister of Health Promotion and Sport
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5

Honourable Ministers:

The Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit recently approved the enclosed Resolution regarding the issue of flavours in tobacco products. We are requesting the Ministers of Health and Health Promotion and Sport to work together to implement strong legislation to ban all flavours from all tobacco products, to effectively remove these youth-attractive products from the marketplace.

Youth from our region created and launched a campaign in July 2008 requesting a ban on flavours in tobacco products because the products targeted youth (www.flavourgone.ca). Their concern and desire to act arose from witnessing significant chew tobacco use in sports teams (e.g., football and hockey) among their peers. Their movement was taken up by youth across Ontario and Canada, who also recognized the youth-targeting practices of the tobacco industry

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in other flavoured tobacco products such as cigarillos and blunt wraps. In 2009 the federal and Ontario governments acted by approving Bill C-32 and amending the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*.

Unfortunately, the resulting legislation in both cases dealt only with one tobacco product – cigarillos – and even in that case, the definition used in the new regulations created a loophole for the tobacco industry to simply re-design their small cigar products to fall slightly outside of the definition. Today the tobacco industry continues to produce and legally market flavoured cigarillo-type products in youth-attractive packaging; flavoured chew tobacco continues to be widely available; and youth continue to get hooked on tobacco products because these flavoured versions make it easy for them to get started.

The Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit agrees with youth that the only real solution to this issue is to ban all flavours in all tobacco products. Chew tobacco will lose its appeal to the young user very quickly when the heavily sugared flavours are removed. If flavours are not allowed in any products, the tobacco industry will not be able to circumvent weight or descriptive definitions by simply re-designing their product. Adult users will adapt or quit, and many youth will not start.

We commend this to you as Ministers of the Crown responsible for the health of the citizens, as an action that can have only positive impact for everyone – except the tobacco industry.

Yours in health,



John Albanese
Chair
Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit

Encl.

c: Greg Rickford, MP, Kenora
John Rafferty, MP, Thunder Bay-Rainy River
Howard Hampton, MPP, Kenora-Rainy River
Bill Mauro, MPP, Thunder Bay-Atikokan
Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Obligated Municipalities for Northwestern Health Unit
Dr. Jim Arthurs, Medical Officer of Health (A)
Mark Perrault, Chief Executive Officer

NORTHWESTERN HEALTH UNIT

BOARD OF HEALTH

No. 114 - 2010

MOTION/RESOLUTION

Moved by Julie Roy.....

Seconded by M. Hawland.....

WHEREAS the Flavour...GONE! campaign to protect youth from starting tobacco use by eliminating the youth-friendly flavours from tobacco products was initiated by youth working with the Northwestern Health Unit;

AND WHEREAS the provincial (Ontario) and federal governments, in response, enacted legislation to eliminate flavours from specific tobacco products like cigarillos;

AND WHEREAS this legislation, both provincial and federal, has failed to stop the marketing of tobacco products to youth by using flavours to make the products more attractive and palatable to young non-users;

AND WHEREAS youth in Ontario and Canada continue to initiate tobacco use, both smoking and chew tobacco, as a result of first use with easily tolerated flavoured versions;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit requests the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport for the Province of Ontario and the Minister of Health for Canada to amend their flavour ban legislation to properly and thoroughly ban the addition of flavours in ALL tobacco products;

AND FURTHER THAT this Resolution be forwarded to members of Parliament for Kenora and Thunder Bay-Rainy River constituencies; members of Provincial Parliament for Kenora-Rainy River and Thunder Bay-Atikokan; all Ontario public health units; the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA); and obligated municipalities for the Northwestern Health Unit for their consideration for endorsement and submission to the Ministers.

Date October 22, 2010

Chair John Albanese
John Albanese