



# Northwestern Health Unit

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December 16, 2009

The Honourable Hugh D. Segal, Senator  
Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Segal:

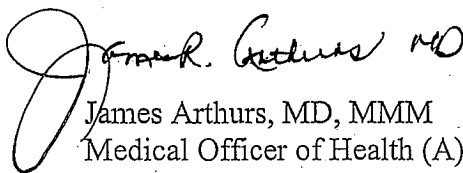
Re: Reducing Contraband Tobacco in Canada

I write to express the Northwestern Health Unit's appreciation and support for your remarks in the Senate on December 1, 2009, regarding the serious issue of contraband tobacco in Canada. They were comprehensive and accurate in the description of this illegal trade, and the inquiry that you propose is to be commended.

The Board of Health for Northwestern Health Unit, my staff and I wholeheartedly agree that the availability of cheap contraband tobacco in our communities threatens the advances made in recent decades towards reducing the damage caused by tobacco use. The evidence is clear that cheap tobacco products make it more likely that youth will start to smoke and less likely that smokers will try to quit. The implications of this are grave for public health in Canada and point to the need to have contraband tobacco dealt with at the federal government level in a comprehensive and legislative manner.

Please accept our encouragement and support for your efforts, and our thanks for bringing this important issue to the fore. We look forward to congratulating the government and Senate as they move forward on this issue.

Yours truly,

  
James Arthurs, MD, MMM  
Medical Officer of Health (A)

JA/ds

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The Honourable Hugh D. Segal, Senator  
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c: Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada  
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Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State  
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Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance  
Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion  
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Valerie Sterling, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
✓ Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
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