

April 25, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Ministry of Health
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

Dear Minister Jones:

RE: The Sale of Nicotine Pouches in Ontario

The Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Board of Health passed the following motion at its meeting of April 24, 2024:

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health endorse the recommendations proposed by the Canadian Cancer Society for immediate action by the Provincial Government of Ontario to restrict the sale of nicotine pouches to behind the counter in Ontario pharmacies, and to urge the Government of Canada to expedite their proposed regulatory response to nicotine pouches announced on March 20, 2024.

Health Canada's approval of Zonnic as a nicotine replacement therapy in July 2023 has exposed crucial gaps in federal and provincial regulations related to nicotine products. This product appeared in retail outlets such as convenience stores and gas stations across Ontario communities in mid-October 2023. With colourful packaging and flavours including Berry Frost, Chill Mint and Tropic Breeze, this product is being positioned to appeal to youth through lifestyle marketing and in-store promotion near candy and chocolate displays.

Nicotine pouches are not subject to the same federal and provincial sale and promotion restrictions as tobacco and vaping products and are readily accessible to Ontario's youth. Increased access to nicotine products by youth is concerning because of the harms of nicotine to the developing brain and threatens to increase nicotine dependence amongst youth and adults who do not smoke.

Although the Government of Canada is working towards closing the regulatory gap and is working with provincial and territorial governments on complementary control measures, there are immediate actions that the Government of Ontario can take as robust regulatory frameworks are developed. First, we urge you to require that nicotine pouches be sold in pharmacies from behind the counter only. The provinces of Quebec and British Columbia have already implemented this measure.

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health

www.kflaph.ca

Main Office 221 Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, Ontario K7M 1V5
613-549-1232 | 1-800-267-7875
Fax: 613-549-7896

Branch Offices

Cloyne	613-336-8989	Fax: 613-336-0522
Napanee	613-354-3357	Fax: 613-354-6267
Sharbot Lake	613-279-2151	Fax: 613-279-3997

By doing so, these provinces have maintained access to this form of nicotine replacement therapy for those who are attempting to quit using nicotine products while protecting youth from a highly addictive substance.

Second, we would also ask that you urge the Government of Canada to move quickly to address the regulatory gaps related to these products to protect the health of Ontarians.

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug and without a robust regulatory framework at both the federal and provincial levels, emerging nicotine products such as nicotine pouches threatens to increase nicotine dependence amongst youth and adults who do not smoke.

Sincerely,



Wess Garrod
KFL&A Board of Health Chair

Copy to: The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health for Canada
The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health
MPP Ric Bresee, Hastings-Lennox and Addington
MPP Ted Hsu, Kingston and the Islands
MPP John Jordan, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)