

Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada
Statement on E-Cigarettes

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Electronic-cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are a relatively new product category with rapid sales growth in Canada and around the world. E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices, which simulate the smoking experience using an inhalation process that vapourizes a liquid solution. The contained liquid solution varies in composition, but often includes a substance such as propylene glycol. The solution can be accompanied by concentrated flavours and in some instances a variable amount of nicotine.

To date, no company has received product approval from Health Canada to sell e-cigarettes with nicotine, therefore, e-cigarettes with nicotine may not be legally manufactured, imported or sold in Canada. However, e-cigarettes containing nicotine and liquid nicotine are often available online or in retail outlets, albeit illegally. E-cigarettes without nicotine may be legally sold in Canada, however it is illegal to make a health claim for these products, such as stating that the product is effective for smoking cessation. The evidence supporting the efficacy of e-cigarettes with nicotine as a cessation tool is emerging, albeit currently insufficient/fully conclusive.

Two key issues need to be addressed with more research: efficacy as a cessation tool; and, potential negative impacts (e.g., safety of the product; is it a gateway to nicotine addiction, and; could it serve to renormalize cigarette smoking).. Until we know more, e-cigarettes should be regulated in much the same way as tobacco products.

The Need for Regulation

Although there are potential cessation benefits associated with nicotine-based e-cigarettes as demonstrated in early research studies, there are also some possible risks. Regulations at the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal levels (as relevant) are needed to help prevent and deter young people from using all e-cigarettes, which have the potential to be a gateway to tobacco use. Regulations could also help prevent e-cigarettes usage among non-smokers and the marketing of e-cigarettes from renormalizing smoking and undermining smoking cessation efforts. As well, there is uncertainty regarding the long-term effects of the vapour from e-cigarettes, including secondhand vapour.

The following policy recommendations should be implemented by governments at the federal, provincial and/or municipal level (as appropriate) for all e-cigarettes, whether they contain nicotine or not and whether or not Health Canada has approved e-cigarettes with nicotine for sale in Canada.

- **Restrict accessibility including:**
 - **prohibit e-cigarette sales to minors** (18 or 19 years of age, depending on the minimum tobacco age in the province).

- **prohibit use of e-cigarettes in workplaces and public places where smoking is banned by law** as well as and elementary and secondary school property.
- **restrict locations where e-cigarettes may be sold.**
- **Regulate the industry including:**
 - **the product itself, including flavours, and requiring that e-cigarettes be visually distinct from regular cigarettes.** This is important in order to prevent renormalization and confusion with tobacco cigarettes among youth. In particular, e-cigarettes should not include imitation filters or glowing tips or have the same appearance as a regular tobacco cigarette.
 - **restrictions on e-cigarette advertising and promotion.** In the US there is considerable advertising of e-cigarettes as a product that can be used where smoking is prohibited. This is concerning because in effect, e-cigarettes are being marketed as an alternative to *not smoking*, thus undermining efforts to denormalize the practice of smoking. In the US, there is also considerable promotion of e-cigarettes through lifestyle advertising, which sometimes includes celebrities. From our experience with tobacco marketing we know that advertising is responsible for significant rates of youth initiation.
 - **developing and enforcing standards** for all vapourized inhalation liquid solutions. In Canada our food is regulated, medicine is regulated, even air quality is regulated – proudly, it seems everything Canadians might inhale or ingest is regulated; e-cigarettes should not be exempt.
- **Invest in targeted research**
 - Invest in further research and data collection through federal agencies such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) to build the evidence base to guide further policy and program development by exploring both potential benefits and harms.