

For Immediate Release
July 20, 2020

BC Regulations Fail to Address Youth Vaping

TORONTO, ONTARIO (July 20, 2020) – The Government of British Columbia’s regulations announced today to restrict the availability of vaping products in convenience stores, while allowing specialty vape shops and online retailers to continue to operate unchecked, will not address youth vaping.

“All the available evidence shows that convenience stores outperform specialty retail shops in the responsible retailing of age-restricted products. Recent reports released by the Government of Canada show that 87 percent of convenience stores passed their mystery shopping tests, compared to the 20 percent of vape shops which passed,” said Anne Kothawala, President and CEO of the Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) noting that 8 out of 10 shops failed mystery shopping tests.

In the largest study of its kind conducted in Canada, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) “*2019 Drug use Among Ontario Students Report*” found that convenience stores were **‘the least common source of vaping products for youth.’** Borrowing from a friend topped the list (53.7%), buying from a friend or someone else (11.2%), and purchasing from a specialty vape store (9.7%) rounded out the top three sources of vaping products for youth with convenience stores making up less than 1%. “This report confirms what we have been saying for months; convenience stores are not the source of vaping products for youth,” continued Kothawala.

Kothawala also noted that the proposal to reduce nicotine concentrations could force adult customers of vaping products back to cigarettes. “Our industry sales data shows that over 90 percent of adult smokers who switched from tobacco to a reduced risk vaping product chose a flavoured option with a nicotine concentration that matches that of a cigarette. While we fully support any efforts to combat the increase in youth vaping, restricting the ability of convenience stores to offer the products our adult customers need to successfully quit smoking is not only misguided, it is dangerous public policy.”

There is still time for the BC government to implement policies that will actually work, but until the government addresses the true sources of youth access to vaping products from online retailers and vape shops that continually violate federal laws, they will not address the youth vaping issue and will fail to meet their harm reduction strategy,” concluded Kothawala.

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