



CICC CONVENIENCE INDUSTRY
COUNCIL OF CANADA

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L'INDUSTRIE DES DÉPANNEURS

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CICC Condemns BC Government Unilateral Decision to Restrict the Sale of Nicotine Pouches

The Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) is shocked and disappointed by today's announcement by the British Columbia government to limit the sale of some nicotine replacement therapy products to behind the counter at pharmacies. "Adult smokers who want to quit are far more likely to try replacement therapy if it is available where they shop, often at their local convenience store. In essence, the government is making it harder for those that want to quit to find a replacement," said Sara MacIntyre, Vice-President for Western Canada.

As an industry, we have a strong reputation as responsible retailers for age-gated products. When nicotine pouches launched last year, the CICC developed guidelines for all our member retailers to keep these products behind the counter, age-restrict them in the same way as tobacco and vaping products and restrict in-store advertising target youth (full guidelines below).

"If the government was serious about limiting youth access to nicotine products they would target the many on-line retailers that sell without age-verification and deliver right to the door. The government did not consult with one store owner or industry member, not one phone call and unilaterally announced changes to one particular type of nicotine replacement product. It is nothing short of hypocrisy that nicotine gum and lozenges can be bought at the counter around the province at pharmacies but that nicotine pouches will now require pharmacists' supervision."

"This is yet another BC government decision that takes no consideration of the impact on local businesses. It's not surprising that BC has the highest rate of store closures in the country. We will make our case to the government in the coming days to remind them of the importance of the corner store and how their decisions put our retailers in peril."

"As responsible retailers, we developed and adopted guidelines for the sale of a product that was approved by Health Canada. This decision by the BC government punishes our local business owners who follow the law and are critical to the communities they serve, particularly in more remote areas.

"We will push the government to reconsider its decision and recognize that it unduly punishes law abiding retailers," concluded MacIntyre.

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Guidelines on the Sale of Nicotine Pouches

Recently Health Canada has approved the sale of nicotine pouches as a nicotine replacement therapy smoking cessation product under the Natural Health Product Regulations, regulations which fall under the *Food and Drugs Act*. As a new and regulated product to the market, the Convenience Industry Council of Canada has developed a set of guidelines for the sale of nicotine pouches at retail member locations.

Although the sale of such products is not required to be age-gated, nor have restricted access or advertising, as responsible retailers we recognize the importance of maintaining appropriate practices of regulated products.

The CICC recommends retailers ensure the following:

1. Retailers should not sell nicotine pouches that are not approved by Health Canada
2. Nicotine pouches should be sold as an age-restricted product the equivalent to the provincial legal age for the sale of tobacco at the point of purchase
3. Retailers should always ask any person who looks to be under the age of 25 to provide valid, government issued photo-id to establish proof of age
4. Nicotine pouch products should be kept behind the counter
5. Retailers maintain reasonable efforts to avoid in-store advertising that may be seen to target youth

Finally, we will be updating our ***ID Please*** training program modules to include the sale of nicotine pouches as an age-gated product. We also recommend that retailers who do not use ***ID Please*** also update their own programs.

The introduction of new products presents an opportunity for our industry to reinforce our role as responsible community retailers. Nicotine pouches are an innovative offer for smokers that are trying to quit, and it is a product that convenience retailers are approved to sell. The CICC guidelines are to ensure that such products are sold appropriately and to maintain our reputation as responsible retailers.

About the Convenience Industry Council of Canada

The Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) is a national, not-for-profit council that represents more than 25,000 convenience retailers nationwide. Our sector employs more than 212,000 Canadians and generates an estimated \$55 billion in economic impact from coast to coast to coast. Convenient in good times and essential in tough times. In British Columbia, the CICC represents over 2,200 retail locations, directly employs 19,000 people, and collects over \$1.6 billion in provincial taxation annually.

