
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020HLTH0038-001324
July 20, 2020

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Education

Province implements vaping action plan

VICTORIA – The Province is bringing into force regulations to fully implement the Province’s leading-edge vaping action plan, which was announced in November 2019.

The regulations restrict the content, flavour, packaging, advertising and sale of vapour products in British Columbia.

B.C.’s ministries of Health and Education will also establish a provincial youth advisory council to develop, pilot and launch youth-informed strategies to reduce vaping by young people.

“We heard from young people across the province that vaping companies are targeting them with a product that poses real and serious health and addiction risks,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “That’s why we are bringing in regulations to keep vapour products away from developing lungs and to prevent nicotine addiction. We know youth are eager to get involved in this action, and I’ve seen promising work through early youth engagement to help influence their peers and stop this dangerous trend of addiction.”

The new E-Substances Regulation, under the Public Health Act, restricts the amount of nicotine in vapour pods and liquid to 20mg/ml, and requires retailers to sell only those vapour products that are plainly packaged and have labels with health warnings. New retailers planning to sell vape products will need to comply with the regulation immediately. Existing vapour-product retailers will have a short transition period until Sept. 15, 2020.

The regulation immediately prohibits all retailers from selling non-nicotine or nicotine-cannabis blended vapour products.

Changes to the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Regulation ban advertising of vapour products in places where youth can access, hear or see advertisements, such as bus shelters or community parks. They also restrict the sale of flavoured vapour products, which are attractive to youth, to adult-only shops.

The provincial youth advisory council will launch in September 2020, through a partnership between the ministries of Education and Health. The council will be established next month and will also monitor and evaluate the overall impact of the plan.

“Schools are the perfect place to talk with young people about the negative effects vaping can have on their health and development, so they have the knowledge they need to make decisions about the use of nicotine and tobacco,” said Rob Fleming, Minister of Education. “That’s why we worked with students and health experts to find the best ways to reach British Columbia’s youth and their families for a campaign that will go a long way in promoting healthy choices for kids.”

Other non-regulatory action under the Province's vaping action plan, includes a youth-led anti-vaping social media campaign to de-normalize vaping. Youth throughout B.C. were engaged through regional youth advisory tables, to provide guidance for the "evaporate" campaign. Launched in February 2020, the campaign has so far garnered over 27 million digital impressions.

With provincial support, last year the BC Lung Association created and distributed a youth vaping prevention toolkit to all K-12 schools in British Columbia. The toolkit provides information for educators, parents and youth to use when having discussions and making choices about vaping.

The Province is also providing support to vapers who want help to quit through the quit-smoking service, QuitNow. QuitNow has been updated to include new quit-vaping information resources for youth and provides coaching by phone or text.

The action plan required the Province to implement increased sales tax, which was implemented on Jan. 1, 2020.

B.C.'s youth vaping action plan is the most comprehensive plan in Canada to address vaping by youth. It focuses on stopping youth vaping, while ensuring vaping can still be used as a harm reduction tool by adults.

Quotes:

Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer –

"Providing young people in B.C. information about the risks of vaping, while restricting the advertising and flavours used to make it attractive, is an important step in stemming the use of this addictive and dangerous product. This approach mirrors the effective measures we used to reduce youth smoking, and continuing to work with youth on this action plan can ensure we protect a new generation from nicotine."

Christopher Lam, president and CEO, BC Lung Association –

"We applaud the B.C. government's determination to protect our youth from the harms of vaping. Increased measures to cap allowable nicotine dosages, further limit advertising and restrict access to flavoured products are very positive, as is the Province's commitment to giving youth an active voice and role in defining effective vaping education solutions."

Jeff Sommers, director, government relations and health promotion, Heart & Stroke BC & Yukon –

"Heart & Stroke has been advocating for these changes for a long time and we applaud the provincial government for moving forward with such a bold and comprehensive plan to address the youth vaping crisis. Use and addiction of vape products among youth has skyrocketed. Flavours provide the attraction, while high nicotine content hooks them. This is why the government's actions are so vital, as they will protect the health of our young people."

Andrea Seale, chief executive officer, Canadian Cancer Society –

"We are deeply concerned by the dramatic increase in youth vaping. The new B.C. regulations

are strong, containing a series of essential measures. The regulations, which we fully support, will significantly reduce youth vaping and will help prevent a new generation of youth from becoming addicted to nicotine through vaping products.”

Learn More:

For a summary of vaping regulations:

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2020.07.20_SummaryVaping_Regs.pdf

Ministry of Health vaping website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/vaping>

BC Lung Association Vaping toolkit: <https://bc.lung.ca/vaping-toolkit>

QuitNow quit smoking/vaping service: <https://www.quitnow.ca/>

Two backgrounders follow.

Contact:

Ministry of Health

Communications

250 952-1887 (media line)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND 1

For Immediate Release
2020HLTH0038-001324
July 20, 2020

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Education

Vaping action plan: updates

- Regulate nicotine content in vapour products:
 - in force July 2020, for new retailers
 - Existing retailers have until Sept. 15, 2020, to sell existing stock.
- Restrict the sale of flavoured vapour products.
 - in force July 2020, for new retailers
 - Existing retailers have until Sept. 15, 2020, to sell existing stock.
- Implement new labelling requirements to include plain packaging and health warnings:
 - in force July 2020
- Strengthen restrictions on public advertising:
 - in force July 2020
- Increase the provincial sales tax on vapour products and accessories:
 - completed Jan. 1, 2020.
- Create a provincial youth advisory committee to support and advise on youth vaping, education, social awareness and other initiatives:
 - to begin in August 2020
- Distribute the BC Lung Association vaping prevention toolkit provincewide to schools for students, parents and educators:
 - completed Jan. 1, 2020
- Launch a stop vaping youth social awareness and marketing campaign:
 - launched November 2019
- Enhanced QuitNow resources for youth wanting to quit vaping:
 - completed

Contact:

Ministry of Health
Communications
250 952-1887 (media line)

BACKGROUND 2

For Immediate Release
2020HLTH0038-001324
July 20, 2020

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Education

Provincial youth advisory council

On Nov. 14, 2019, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, announced the Province's Vaping Action Plan that included launching a provincial youth advisory council.

The purpose of the council is to:

- have a sole focus on youth vaping;
- engage the youth voice and perspective;
- provide feedback on existing actions in the action plan; and
- identify additional actions and initiatives that would be effective in reducing youth vaping.

The original proposal was to establish an in-person council that would operate for approximately 18 months, meeting approximately quarterly over the school year.

- The launch was proposed for May 2020.
- A decision on the creation of the council was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of school classes.

Provincial youth vaping advisory council – terms of reference

Overview:

E-cigarettes have become popular among youth in recent years. They are easy to access, come in a variety of appealing flavours and are promoted as safe and fun by many influencers. These products may cause health risks and have not been fully evaluated for safety and quality by Health Canada. The evidence is mounting that the health-related impacts, and number of youth who are addicted to nicotine is on the rise.

On Nov. 14, 2019, one of the key commitments from the provincial vaping action plan, made by the Minister of Health on behalf of the Province, was to establish a provincial youth vaping advisory council (the council) to actively engage youth on this important issue.

Mandate:

The mandate of the council is to provide advice and inform vaping related education and awareness and social awareness campaigns, as well as identify other actions and initiatives with the goal to support the health and wellness and improve the overall resilience of youth.

Term:

The first term of the council will be from September 2020, to June 2021 (eight months). The first meeting is expected to occur in September or October 2020, with meetings throughout the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

Membership:

The council membership will be drawn from B.C., youth aged 13 to 18 years.

Youth selections for the council will reflect regional representation, support diversity of perspectives and varied provincial contexts.

Students may qualify for course credit, acknowledging their work on the council and discuss with their school principal how they might access credits for Independent directed studies.

Working groups:

Working groups may be established as needed, to develop resources based on the council's advice and/or ministry direction. Working group membership may consist of council members, as well as external members, as needed.

Frequency of meetings:

The advisory will meet quarterly (up to four times per year) virtually. Special ad hoc meetings may also be called as required.

Agenda and minutes:

Ministry representatives will provide an agenda in advance of the meeting. Notes will be taken at the meeting and a record of discussion will be shared with all group members.

Secretariat and support:

The sponsoring ministry will provide secretariat support to the council.

Review of the terms of reference:

The terms of reference will be reviewed by the council to ensure they remain current. At the discretion of the ministry, the terms of reference and membership of the council may also be reviewed and adjusted.

Confidentiality:

It is understood that meetings and discussions of the council are not confidential. However, at the discretion of the ministry, members may be asked to keep specific items confidential. Names of members may be shared publicly.

Contact:

Ministry of Health
Communications
250 952-1887 (media line)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect