November 29, 2019

The Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Sent via e-mail: Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Hajdu,

Congratulations on your appointment as Federal Minister of Health. We look forward to working with you to advance the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Peterborough Public Health (PPH) has been long involved in raising concerns regarding the impact of vaping on non-smokers and in particular, youth. Continuing with this advocacy in order to protect youth in our community is critical. At the October 9, 2019 meeting of the Board of Health, communications from both the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington Boards of Health (attached) were reviewed regarding vaping in Ontario.

PPH has provided feedback to a number of Health Canada consultations related to vaping and youth including advertising of vaping products (March 2019), regulatory measures to reduce youth access and appeal of vaping products (June 2019) and labelling and packaging of vaping products (August 2019). PPH responses to these consultations have noted that while vaping may be less harmful than smoking tobacco, it is not harm free. This has been demonstrated most recently by the hospitalization of a young person in the Middlesex-London Health Unit area, following hundreds of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States as a result of vaping-related pulmonary illness.1

On September 19, 2019, representatives from eight health organizations (Action on Smoking and Health, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Lung Association, Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac, Heart & Stroke, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco and Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada) made an appeal for immediate federal action to curb the marketing of vaping products.2 These groups urged all federal political parties to commit to an urgent interim order that would put vaping products under the same kind of restrictions that are currently in place for tobacco products. Acceptance of this interim order would result in having protective restraints in place this calendar year using the powers of the Department of Health Act within sixty (60) days of a forming government.

We ask that action using the interim order is taken immediately to curb the marketing of vaping products in order to protect youth and reverse the current trend in both youth vaping and tobacco rates. Vaping products must be under the same kind of restrictions that are currently in place for tobacco products. Acceptance of an interim order using the powers of the Department of Health Act would result in having protective restraints in place this calendar year. Placing stronger restrictions on vape promotion is one of the most obvious solutions to protect the health of Canadians.
Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc:  Hon. Christine Elliott, Ontario Minister of Health  
Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario  
Local MPs and MPPs  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies

---
