

April 30, 2024

The Honourable Mark Holland
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
hcmminister.ministresc@hc-sc.gc.ca

Dear Minister Holland,

Re: Recommendation for Federal Restrictions on Nicotine Pouches

Peterborough Public Health (PPH) wishes to express our gratitude and support for the “Statement from the Minister of Health on nicotine replacement therapies” and the corresponding public advisory, released on March 20th, 2024. We share your concerns regarding the highly addictive and harmful effects of nicotine, especially as they pertain to children and adolescents.

We know that Health Canada has only authorized nicotine pouches to help adults quit smoking. However, as you now know, this novel product is not being marketed or sold as a typical cessation aid. A regulatory gap exists that has presented an opportunity to market and sell highly addictive and dangerous nicotine pouches in brightly coloured packaging with candy-like flavours with no restrictions. These products have a high potential to appeal to youth, who are particularly susceptible to the adverse effects associated with nicotine use, addiction, and the developing brain.

PPH supports the implementation of federal regulations to target the marketing and sale of nicotine pouches and other nicotine-containing products. Specifically, we ask:

- that the federal government takes swift action to close the regulatory gap that currently permits the sale of nicotine pouches and other nicotine-containing products to individuals under 18 years of age; and,
- that the federal government requests provinces align their applicable legislation with said federal restriction.

Closing this regulatory gap is necessary to safeguard public health and must be urgently addressed. Immediate federal action to restrict the sale of these items would provide the time necessary for the province of Ontario to embed restrictions within the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, while protecting the communities we serve in the meantime.

We echo your sentiment that nicotine pouches pose a significant risk for addiction and long-term health consequences, especially among youth and adolescents. Restricting nicotine pouch sales will reinforce the great strides already made to protect youth from the dangers of tobacco and nicotine use, promoting healthier lifestyles and fostering a future generation free from addiction-related burdens.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Joy Lachica,
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Ontario Deputy Premier & Minister of Health
Local MPs
Local MPPs
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Public Health Association
Ontario Boards of Health