

News Release

World No Tobacco Day was May 31st...  
**Ministers' silence on vaping product flavour regulations  
raises concerns this important policy has been scrapped**

**Montreal, Ottawa, Edmonton, June 3, 2024** - The Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control, Physicians for a Smoke Free Canada and Action on Smoking & Health (ASH Canada) are disappointed by the joint statement issued on World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) by the Minister of Health, the Hon. Mark Holland, and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, the Hon. Ya'ara Saks.

The ministers' silence on key issues has deepened concerns that the federal government has bowed to industry pressure and has backtracked on promised policy reforms. The vaping flavour restrictions [first Gazetted](#) under then-minister **Patty Hajdu** have been stalled for almost three years.

In keeping with the theme it set for **WNTD** this year – 'Protecting children from tobacco industry interference' – the **World Health Organization** this week repeated its call for stronger policies and programs to protect young people. Among the [measures specifically recommended](#) were banning flavoured e-cigarettes, increasing public awareness of the deceptive tactics used by the industry, and supporting youth-led education and awareness initiatives.

In support of these recommendations, the WHO profiled industry practices in the report '[Hooking the next generation](#)'. *"These industries continue to market their products to young people with enticing flavours like candy and fruit. ...more than 70% of youth e-cigarette users would quit if the products were only available in tobacco flavour. These deceptive tactics highlight the urgent need for strong regulations to protect young people from a lifetime of harmful dependence,"* said **Dr Ruediger Krech, Director, WHO Director of Health Promotion**.

*"Given this context, May 31<sup>st</sup> was the day that these new ministers were expected to offer reassurance of their intention to finalize restrictions on e-cigarette flavours,"* said **Cynthia Callard, Executive Director of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada**. *"But instead of any commitment to expand protection for youth, their joint statement instead boasted about policies implemented by their predecessors and funding for [programs aimed at helping smokers quit](#)."*

*"In the ten months since Minister Saks assumed cabinet responsibility for regulating vaping products, she has been virtually invisible on the file, both in Parliament and on social media,"* added **Callard**. *"It is difficult to interpret her ongoing silence about the youth vaping crisis as anything but a signal that she is not willing or able to finalize this important regulation."*

Efforts by the industry to block regulation in **Canada** have been on full display in recent weeks - including [full page ads](#), a [press conference](#), an [information session](#) for MPs, and the provocation of a pro-industry [World Vape Day](#) (May 30<sup>th</sup>). *"Minister Saks needs to treat these pro-vaping voices for what they are: biased corporate-funded or for-profit entities whose primary mission is to make money. Companies that market addictive berry and mango nicotine products with cool names and attractive packaging are not credible voices with respect to what's in the public's best interests,"* said **Flory Doucas, Spokesperson and Co-Director of the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control**.

While [ongoing research](#) continues to reveal more health risks of vaping, and while experts point to the need to reassess the notion that these products represent reduced-risk alternatives to smoking, the tobacco and vaping industry continue to [coopt the notion of harm reduction](#). *“Governments should not allow tobacco and vaping companies to dictate health policy for Canadians”*, added **Les Hagen, Executive Director of ASH Canada**. *“We would never trust pushers to tell us how to implement policies for illicit drug use”*.

Earlier this week, the [three tobacco control groups](#) wrote to **Minister Saks** expressing their hope to finally see federal leadership on banning flavours in vaping products on **World No Tobacco Day**. The letter reminded the minister that in recent years *“the government’s general response to vaping industry inducements has been slow and timid, and no progress has been made to meaningfully address flavourings, youth access or package and design features which attract youth. ... Young Canadians need protection from commercial activities that harm their health and well-being. By continuing to allow nicotine companies to sell their vaping products in exotically named and enticing flavours and to add cooling ingredients which increase the sensory appeal of nicotine use, your department is contributing to this problem”*.

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