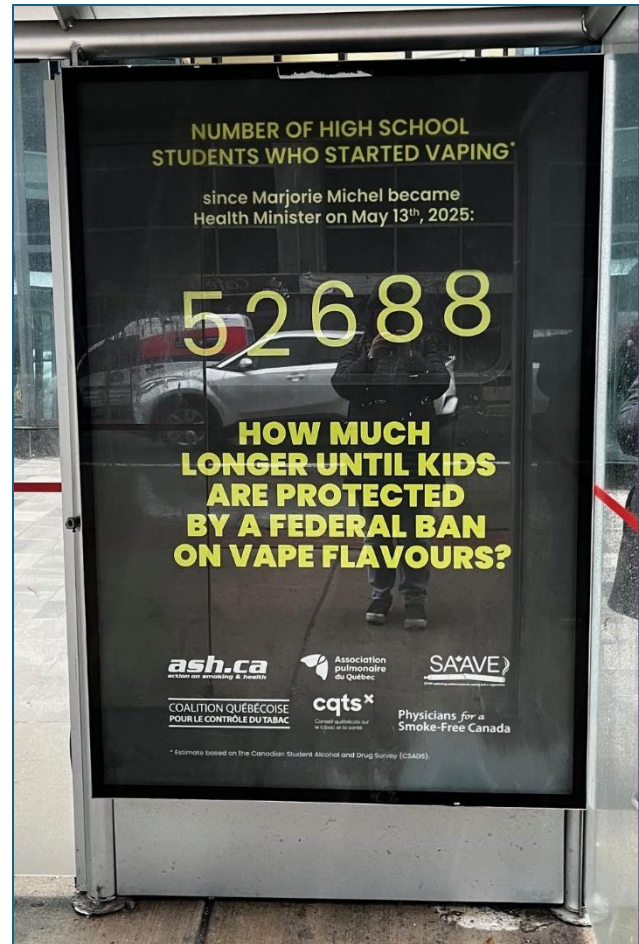


Bus shelter ad highlights 50,000 high school students who've started vaping since Federal Health Minister Marjorie Michel took office, and demands national ban on flavoured e-cigarettes

OTTAWA, April 17, 2026 – Health groups and experts gathered in Ottawa to draw the public's and the **Health Minister's** attention to the unresolved nicotine addiction crisis that continues to plague Canada's youth. They are running transit shelter ads in Ottawa stating that over fifty thousand high school students have started vaping across the country since last May 13th, when **Marjorie Michel** was named **Health Minister**.

Dr Hassan Mir is a cardiologist at the **University of Ottawa Heart Institute** and assistant professor of medicine at the **University of Ottawa**. He presides over the **Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation** and is considered a world expert on smoking cessation, vaping cessation and nicotine addiction. He states *"Flavours are a key factor in attracting young people to nicotine products. Most youth use e-cigarettes beginning with a flavoured variety. The government must recognize that by allowing fruit and minty flavours in vaping products, it is helping a predatory industry addict youth to nicotine. The government's inaction regarding flavours comes at the cost of the wellbeing, health and freedom from addiction of tens of thousands of youths, with their number growing every day."* Dr. Mir adds that *"vaping is associated with increased risk of nicotine addiction, mental health conditions, cardiovascular and oral diseases and causes lung injury. It is not a first-line medication to help people quit smoking, as detailed in our 2025 guideline on smoking cessation, published in the Canadian Journal of Cardiology"*. This also aligns with the recommendations made by the **Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care**.

"In my practice, I have seen several young people whose life has been greatly impacted by nicotine addiction caused by vaping. In teens, vaping can have significant impacts on sleep and everyday functioning. Legal vaping products are easy to access and incredibly addictive, leading many youths to vape daily, some up to 30 times a day, inhaling doses of nicotine that may surpass several packs of cigarettes," explains **Dr. Nicholas Chadi**, the **Director of the substance use clinic at CHU Ste-Justine** and a **clinician-scientist specialized in adolescent and addiction medicine** in Canada. *"Nicotine is a highly addictive substance. During adolescence, nicotine vaping is associated with an increased risk of initiating tobacco use and is also associated with an increase in risk of use of other psychoactive substances."*



*“While we fully acknowledge that Minister Michel inherited the youth vaping crisis from the previous government, she has now been in office for close to a year. At this point, her inaction is perpetuating the crisis, with another fifty thousand teenagers who started vaping since she took office,” says **Cynthia Callard, Spokesperson for Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada**. “Her first priority should be to strengthen and finalize the almost-five-year-old *draft regulations* that aim to restrict flavours in commercially-sold e-cigarettes . Most of not all the additives used to flavour e-cigarettes have never even been approved for inhalation”.*

During the last Federal election, the **Liberal Party** promised to *“prioritize the health of young Canadians by taking strong action to curb youth vaping and stand up to the tobacco and nicotine industry ... we support restrictions on flavoured products, which are clearly designed to appeal to young people.”*

Meanwhile, **Health Canada’s** recent monitoring of the market reconfirms the vaping industry’s ongoing and widespread non-compliance with regulatory measures. *“The vaping industry is notoriously uncompliant, with vape shops openly flouting their willingness to deliver flavoured products to provinces where these are banned, and with large manufacturers eagerly shipping their flavoured products to online retailers that circumvent provincial and territorial rules. The federal government’s inaction with respect to flavours is helping industry players undermine provincial efforts to reduce youth vaping. It’s high time for vaping products sold across the country to be far more regulated, not only to ban flavours but also to eliminate gimmicky elements that make them even more trendy among youth. The immediate removal of fruit, mint, menthol and sweetening additives is the logical place to start”,* says **Flory Doucas, Co-Director of the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control**.

Many popular vaping devices have Bluetooth capacity to stimulate their use and tracking, carry video games, attractive shapes and are wrapped in youth-appealing colours, patterns, and branding. These elements have made nicotine addiction more pleasant and more affordable (more product images here).



The three health groups (**PSFC, ASH** and **CQTC**) recently wrote to all Members of Parliament to ask them to urge the federal government to prioritize the health of Canada’s youth and promptly strengthen and implement the proposed federal vaping flavour regulations. The letter presents the latest research on the positive impacts on youth smoking of the Quebec ban on flavours, while explaining how a federal ban would much improve provincial compliance, especially with respect to legal vape shops from outside Quebec that continue to deliver illegally flavoured e-cigarettes to Quebecers (including leading brands). It also highlights increasing nicotine addiction among teenagers and young adults.

“Over the past eight years, parents, teachers and health professionals have struggled to protect kids from the predatory tactics of the nicotine and tobacco industries” said **Les Hagen, Executive Director of Action on Smoking & Health (ASH Canada)**. *“It is high time for the federal government to stand up to Big Tobacco and Big Nicotine and protect Canada’s youth. Vaping and nicotine addiction have serious health consequences. While the federal government dithers and delays, an average of 155 high school students fall into the industry’s addiction trap every day.”*

“The youth vaping crisis has gone on far too long. The past government’s 2018 decision to liberalize the sale of vaping products without including adequate safeguards to protect youth is a scandal in and of itself. However, the subsequent failure to effectively counter the most appealing factor for kids – flavours – eight years later is outrageous. All of today’s high school students who vape are victims of the lack of action and the collateral

damage of Health Canada's failed harm reduction strategy. This pro-industry stance has negatively impacted half of Canada's youth without producing any measurable benefit in overall smoking cessation among adults," concludes **Ms. Callard**.

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APPENDIX

***Based on data from the 2023–2024 CSADS survey, the rate of vaping adoption among high school students (last 30 days) can be estimated at 1,088 per week, or 155 per day.** Based on these calculations, a counter displayed since June 19 on the website of the [Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control](#) and [Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada](#) shows in real time the estimated number of high school students who have started vaping since the Honorable Marjorie Michel became Minister of Health on May 13, 2025. As of April 17, 2026, more than 50,000 young people have started vaping in Canada since Minister Michel's appointment.

Regardless of the [survey being used](#), **the number of kids using e-cigarettes now is well above that of 2018**, the year the federal government legalized the sale and promotion of e-cigarettes in Canada (after tolerating their illegal sale for several years). **Health Canada's 2023 Canadian Substance Use Survey** found that over one million Canadian teenagers aged 15-19 (48%) had tried vaping products, 681,000 (31%) had used them in the past month and that 400,600 (17%) were vaping on a daily basis.

Besides the forty-six (46) countries that have banned recreational vaping products altogether, a growing number have banned flavours other than tobacco, such as Finland in 2016, Lithuania in 2022, Hungary and Ukraine in 2023, the Netherlands and Slovenia in 2024 and Latvia in 2025. Closer to home, the states of California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington, DC have also banned flavours. In Canada, four provinces and two territories have banned flavoured vaping products. However, the provincial bans are being undermined by the absence of a national flavour ban--triggering significant illegal shipments and online sales from other provinces.