

October 25, 2019

Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health 10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit I wish to commend your decision to prohibit the promotion of vapour products in convenience stores and gas stations effective January 1, 2020. This regulatory amendment to the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* will have immediate and long-lasting benefits, protecting the health of the youth in our province.

Your leadership is in keeping with the letter from the Board of Health to you and the federal Minister of Health on September 18, 2019, calling for stringent restrictions on the display and promotion of vaping products and to ban flavoured e-cigarettes. This is to help prevent the further uptake of vaping (and with it, the potential risk of smoking commencement) by youth. The Board noted that vaping has been increasing rapidly in our youth which has been borne out in the evidence: A 74% increase in vaping among youth aged 16-19 in Canada was reported from 2017 to 2018.

In recognizing this significant amendment to display and promotion regulation, I renew the Board of Health's request to ban flavoured e-cigarettes. With thousands of flavours of e-liquid available, including candy and fruit-flavoured varieties, the evidence clearly supports that flavoured e-liquid is a significant factor in youth uptake and use .

The Ministry of Health's leadership in enacting the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* one year ago has been critical to the protection of Ontario's citizens from the harms of tobacco, vaping and cannabis. The Board of Health recognizes this action as being an important step, and recommends the further development of a renewed comprehensive tobacco control strategy towards the tobacco endgame goal of achieving a smoking rate of less than 5% by 2035.

Thank you for your leadership on this very important public health matter.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Anita Dubeau
Board of Health Chair

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Cc: Ontario Boards of Health
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Ontario Tobacco Research Unit
Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
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Members of Parliament in Simcoe Muskoka
Members of Provincial Parliament in Simcoe Muskoka
Central Local Health Integration Network
North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network