

Unsmoke: Ideas for a Smoke-Free Canada

43rd Canadian General Election

Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc.

UNSMOKE

/ən'smōk/ - verb

“To rid cigarette smoke from your life”

If You Don't Smoke,
Don't Start.

If You Smoke,
Quit.

If You Don't Quit,
Change.

Smoking in Canada

Today more than 4.5 million adult Canadians are smokers. That means even if you are not a smoker yourself, chances are someone you know, love or work with is likely a smoker.

Cigarette smoking in Canada has been going down, but slowly in recent years. Despite government programs to promote abstinence or cessation, millions of Canadians continue to smoke.

Never starting to smoke or quitting entirely are always the best policy. So governments in Canada should continue to support both of these approaches to protect youth and public health.

But there is also a third way.

In addition to continued support for abstinence and cessation, governments should also support new harm-reduction approaches for tobacco and nicotine use in Canada, to reduce the risk or harm to millions of adult smokers and the people who love them.

The Path to Smoke-Free

Breakthroughs in science can now provide adult smokers with better alternatives to cigarettes for those who will continue to use tobacco or nicotine.

Technology today provides better alternatives to cigarettes by eliminating the burning that releases thousands of toxic chemicals in cigarette smoke.

But policy and regulation in Canada has not kept pace with science and technology.

New rules are needed to protect youth in terms of the safety, standards, appeal and access of new technologies to ensure these smoke-free alternatives are only for existing adult smokers.

Government has a role to help millions of existing adult smokers who won't quit to switch to better, smoke-free alternatives, while vigorously protecting youth from nicotine.

That is why Canada needs brave new ideas for a smoke-free future.

Unsmoke: A Vision for a Smoke-Free Canada

Rothmans, Benson and Hedges Inc. is one of Canada's leading tobacco companies. And we want to Unsmoke Canada.

“We want to Unsmoke Canada. For change like this to happen we need policy makers, consumers and society in general to all play a role.”

Peter Luongo, Managing Director

Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc.

If you don't smoke, don't start.

Unsmoke Canada means *abstinence*, to support policies that protect youth by guarding against youth access to tobacco and nicotine.

If you smoke, quit.

Unsmoke Canada means *cessation*, to support policies that help millions of Canadians to quit tobacco and nicotine entirely.

If you don't quit, change

Unsmoke Canada means *transition*, to support harm-reduction policies that switch Canadians away from cigarettes to better alternatives if they won't quit entirely.

Innovations in science and technology now provide governments with more policy options. A growing body of scientific evidence around the world is showing that these better alternatives, while not risk free, can significantly reduce the exposure to toxic chemicals that cause harm.

For the first time in 120 years, we could eliminate the death and disease caused by the cigarette rolling machine. ¹

Dr. David Abrams, NYU College of Global Public Health

Tobacco and nicotine may not be eliminated entirely in Canada in the future. But governments can take bold new action to reduce significantly the health risks they pose for adults who don't quit and to protect youth from starting nicotine.

That is what it means to Unsmoke Canada.

Telling consumers that all product options are as bad as cigarettes is untrue and almost certainly as deadly for users as telling at-risk populations that condom use affords no protection. Giving accurate information does not guarantee that a problem will be solved, but it stands the ethical rules on their head to not value health literacy and information quality. ²

David Sweanor, Adjunct Professor of Law and Member of the Centre for Health Law, Policy and Ethics, University of Ottawa

¹ Global Forum on Nicotine Asserts Urgency of Tobacco Harm Reduction, Filter Magazine, 17 Jun 2019 [🔗](#)

² International Journal of Drug Policy, June 2016

Recommendations

Rothmans, Benson & Hedges takes seriously our role as responsible corporate partners to advise on areas of policy which, based on our experience, we believe we can provide value to decision makers.

Strong action is needed to protect youth. RBH supports decisive action to improve the safety and standards of all smoke-free technologies, especially vaping. Such products should only be for existing adult smokers. As such, we support measures to reduce the appeal and access of these products to youth.

Such initiatives to protect youth could include increased safety testing, tamper-proof containers, warning labels, regular reporting, promotional constraints, regulation of marketing of flavors in a manner which is not appealing to minors, as well as measures to ensure manufacturers' and retailers' compliance with age limitation/verification should also be explored.

To help existing adult smokers transition from cigarettes to better alternatives if they do not quit, the following regulatory reforms should be considered:

Recommendation #1 – Better Define the Category of Vaping Products

The Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (TVPA) regulates vaping products differently from cigarettes, which is appropriate as these products are not the same as cigarettes. However, the narrow federal definition of vaping products varies from the all provincial definitions, which means some smoke-free electronic products that produce a nicotine aerosol such as vaping are instead regulated like cigarettes. Amend the definition of vaping products to be consistent across Canadian jurisdictions and regulate the entire category of vaping products.

We have the opportunity essentially to eliminate the cigarette through technological change and informed consumer choice. ³

Brian Lee Crowley, Managing Director, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Recommendation #2 – Allow Smokers to be Informed About the Impact of Switching

Health Canada has clearly articulated that, for smokers, switching to a vaping product is better than continuing to smoke. However, the TVPA does not presently allow manufacturers or retailers of vaping products to educate adult smokers about the differences between vaping products and cigarettes. The regulations should allow for limited communication of verifiably accurate, scientifically substantiated statements about vaping products that demonstrate to adult smokers that switching to a vaping product is better than continuing to smoke. At the same time, require that these statements must also clearly articulate that vaping products are only for adult smokers seeking an alternative to cigarettes.

We actually have our regulations backwards in that we're prohibiting the messages that might help smokers to switch to these products and we're allowing the ones that are probably going to have at least as much effect in terms of bringing young people to the market. ⁴

Dr. David Hammond, CIHR-PHAC Chair In Applied Public Health, University Of Waterloo

³ *Preaching only abstinence doesn't work with tobacco either, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 18 Oct 2017* [↗](#)

⁴ *Advertising restrictions needed to curb vaping among youth, researchers say, CBC News, 27 Aug 2019* [↗](#)

Recommendation #3 – Regulate the Sale of Vaping Products Online

Many vaping products in Canada are available for sale online. Presently, the TVPA prohibits the sale of vaping products to those under the age of 18. The TVPA should require online retailers to adhere to particular practices, including third-party age verification prior to sale and identification verification at delivery.

Recommendation #4 – Impose Reasonable Limitations on Advertisements about Vaping Products

One strategy for preventing youth uptake of vaping products is to minimize exposure to advertising about these products. Through the TVPA, the Government of Canada should impose reasonable limitations on the advertising of vaping products in broadcast media, online and in display advertising. Vaping advertisements should not be wholly banned in any of these channels for there is a role here to inform adult smokers about better choices, but limitations should be imposed such that ads are not displayed in places likely to be seen by or appealing to youth.

*Policy makers have missed opportunities to use e-cigarettes to mitigate tobacco-related harm.*⁵

Liam Sigaud and Steve Pociask, American Consumer Institute

Recommendation #5 – Examine incentives to encourage adult smokers to convert

The level of taxation on smoking-related products should directly respond to the health risks they present, to encourage less harmful consumption.



For More Information Contact

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⁵ *A Vaping Ban Will Send Smokers Back to the Pack*, Wall Street Journal, 12 Sept 2019

