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release**

IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA SUPPORTS ACTION TO STOP YOUTH VAPING

Montreal, Quebec - February 19, 2019 – Teachers and parents across the country see it daily: teens are getting access to vapour products and are vaping. Their sale and use should be restricted to adults and Imperial Tobacco Canada supports appropriate measures to ensure youth can not access nicotine products.

“Our position is very simple: just as we believe that youth should not smoke, we agree that youth should not vape,” said Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate Affairs at Imperial Tobacco Canada. “We support measures that prevent under-age access to vapour products.”

A Question of Access

In many ways, the increase in youth vaping should come as no surprise. For years, the vaping market was illegal, and in the absence of any regulation or enforcement independent and on-line retailers filled the vacuum and took advantage of the thriving illicit market with no government oversight on how they operated, what they could sell, the quality of their products, or who they could sell to.

“Unlike some other companies, Imperial Tobacco Canada didn’t begin selling vapour products until the Government of Canada passed legislation that legalized their sale in May 2018,” said Gagnon. “The market was illegal and unregulated, and some companies took advantage of that. We fully support laws and regulations that prohibit the sale of vaping products to anyone under the legal minimum age and we also believe that enforcement and penalties for breaking such laws must be tough enough to discourage anybody from selling to people who are underage”.

Marketing and Promotion

Imperial Tobacco Canada also agrees that marketing and promotion of vapour products including pack communication, design, brand and product names, should not target youth.

However, in order for vaping products to meet their full potential of providing adult smokers a potentially reduced risk alternative to cigarettes, it is imperative that communication be allowed to adult smokers.

“Our target consumers are adult smokers seeking a potentially reduced risk alternative to smoking,” said Gagnon. “Adult smokers looking for an alternative to traditional cigarettes should be able to get the information they need and have access to their vapour product of choice, while maintaining strict measures to prevent youth access.”

Finding a Solution

To properly address youth vaping, it is important to understand how and where Canadian youth are getting their products. The counter-productive approach would be to take a blanket prohibitive approach to communications, promotion and sale. The approach that would benefit all Canadians is one that addresses and eliminates youth access while continuing to allow adult smokers to receive the information required to switch to a potentially reduced risk product.

“We don’t have all the answers but it’s not every day that the tobacco industry, teachers, parents and health professionals are on the same page”, said Gagnon. “It comes down to common sense. Be it tobacco, nicotine, alcohol or cannabis, we can all agree that these products should not end up in the hands of youth”.

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For more information or for interview requests with our spokesperson, please contact:

Emily Wraith

Torchia Communications
416-341-9929 ext. 225 Office
Cell: 519-878-1692
emily@torchiacom.com

Ludovic Iop

Torchia Communications
514-288-8290, ext. 222
Cell: 514-402-0515
ludovic@torchiacom.com