

## **Imperial calls for enforcement-first approach and fact-based action to address youth vaping**

**Montreal, April 20, 2026** – Imperial Tobacco Canada (Imperial) is responding to the April 17 press conference from anti-smoking groups, calling for a more focused, fact-based approach to youth vaping that targets the real source of the problem: the illicit market.

There is unanimous agreement on the core issue. Youth should not be using nicotine products. Imperial supports strong measures to prevent youth access and stresses that enforcement of existing laws must be the priority.

However, the discussion failed to clearly distinguish, and at times blurred the line between the regulated market and the growing illicit market driving youth access.

“The flavoured, youth-appealing products being cited are not coming from Imperial or the regulated market,” said Eric Gagnon, Vice President, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs. “They are overwhelmingly coming from the illicit market, where there are no rules, no oversight and no age verification.”

Recent Health Canada data, which was cited in today’s press conference, underscores the issue. While less than (1%) of gas and convenience stores were found non-compliant, nearly half (43%) of inspected vape shops were in violation. Illegal products continue to be sold openly and are widely available online, often with nicotine levels and flavours not permitted in Canada.

Imperial is calling for immediate action:

- Enforce existing laws for non-compliant shops
- Address access to non-compliant products through robust enforcement of laws across entire supply chain
- Set national rules on flavours that limit youth appeal while preserving only adult-focused options
- Clearly distinguish between authorized and illicit products to better educate adult consumers
- Improve dialogue between industry, public health and regulators to develop smart regulations, based on science and evidence to prevent unintended consequences

“Enforcement and education are the missing pieces,” Gagnon added. “If the objective is to protect youth, the focus must be on stopping illegal sales and holding bad actors accountable.”

The same principle applies to nicotine pouches. There is a clear difference between products that are authorized by Health Canada and illicit products sold online with significantly higher nicotine levels. Maintaining that distinction is essential for both youth protection and public health.

“Enforce the rules, shut down illegal sales, set clear limits on adult-focused flavours and stop blurring the line between legal and illicit products,” Gagnon said. “That’s how you protect youth and move Canada toward a smoke-free 2035.”

Imperial invites anti-smoking groups, public health advocates and governments to move beyond rhetoric and work together on solutions that will have a real impact. That starts with aligning on the facts, targeting the illicit market and taking meaningful action to protect youth.

### **About Imperial Tobacco Canada**

Imperial Tobacco Canada is the leading tobacco and nicotine company in Canada, part of the global BAT group. Our mission at BAT is to [create A Better Tomorrow™](#) by promoting a Smokeless World. We envision a future where smokeless products replace cigarettes, encouraging smokers to make a Switch to Better.

Imperial is committed to advancing THR through transparency, innovation, and collaboration. One such initiative is Omni™, a platform developed by our parent company BAT, to support education and stakeholder engagement around THR. [Omni™](#) serves as a dynamic resource for those working toward a smoke-free future.

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