



PRESS RELEASE
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To educate or not to educate, that is the question

The BC government continues to deny adult smokers the right to informed choice

Vancouver, January 17, 2019 – Despite the many sources that state vaping products are less harmful than traditional tobacco products, and the thousands of people that have switched from cigarettes to vaping products, the government of British Columbia continues to prevent adult smokers from obtaining the information needed to make an informed choice when it comes to cigarettes versus vaping.

“The approach taken by the BC government makes it impossible to educate adult smokers about their choices and the options they have to consume a product with significantly less risk than cigarettes”, said Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at Imperial Tobacco Canada. “This is why we have launched a campaign in retail outlets across the province (vapingdeservesbetter.org) that aims to provide adult smokers with a platform to have their voices heard and request that their government change its approach on how it regulates vaping products.”

Despite credible evidence that demonstrates the harm reduction potential of vaping products compared to cigarettes, the BC government has chosen to regulate both products the same way. This decision results in the products being hidden at point of sale and the retailer unable to inform or educate the consumer about the alternatives to smoking.

Multiple studies and academic journals have reaffirmed the less harmful nature of vaping products. Recently, Public Health England found vaping products to be 95% less harmful than traditional cigarettes. In Canada, the federal Health Minister has said that she “understands the potential of vaping products as a harm reduction tool”, and the Health Canada website affirms that “Vaping is less harmful than smoking”.

Many health groups are advocating for British Columbia to be the first province to reach 5% smoking incidence by 2035. Imperial Tobacco Canada believes this can be achieved sooner if the provincial government would allow and support appropriate communication about vaping products to adult consumers. We hope the BC government will join other Canadian provinces and allow their adult smokers the right to make an informed decision.

“As part of our transforming tobacco journey we continue to embrace the principles of harm reduction by offering adult smokers a range of products with reduced risk potential,” stated Gagnon. “However, how can we expect adult smokers to switch to less harmful alternatives if they don’t know what’s available to them?”

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