



HEALTH OFFICERS COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dr. Charl Badenhorst, Chair

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October 23, 2014

Chair and Board Members
College of Pharmacists of BC
200-1765 West 8th Ave
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5C6

Dear Mr. Kipp,

Re: Support for the College of Pharmacists of BC proposal to prohibit the issuance of a pharmacy licence to operators who sell tobacco products on pharmacy premises.

On behalf of the Health Officers Council of British Columbia (HOC), I am writing to express the strong support of our members for your position.

HOC represents public health physicians and other physicians and health practitioners in BC who are closely aligned with public health. At our April 2014 meeting, our members passed our second resolution recommending to the Minister of Health a ban on the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies. Our April 2014 resolution also recommended that the Ministry of Health eliminate dispensing fees for nicotine replacement therapy and MSP fees for immunization for pharmacists who continue to sell tobacco products or practice in businesses that sell tobacco products. We are waiting for a response from Minister Lake.

British Columbia now stands as the only Canadian province allowing the sale of cigarettes in pharmacies. Every other province has clear legislation restricting this practice. Pharmacies (and stores containing pharmacies) are a part of the health care system, and consumers recognize them as such. Pharmacists are respected and trusted health professionals who are playing an increasingly important role in the system. The sale of tobacco in pharmacies is now recognized as an unacceptable ethical and professional contradiction. The recent announcement ending tobacco sales by the US chain CVS eloquently summarizes this issue.

“Ending the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products at CVS/pharmacy is simply the right thing to do for the good of our customers and our company. The sale of tobacco products is inconsistent with our purpose – helping people on their path to better health....cigarettes and tobacco products have no place in a setting where health care is delivered. This is the right thing to do”.

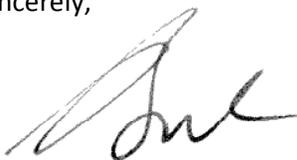
This statement by an influential pharmacy retailer, the growing support from pharmacists, and the presence of similar restrictions in the rest of the country must lead the province of British

Columbia to question its current stance. Beyond being inconsistent with the role of pharmacists as health care professionals, allowing cigarettes to be sold in pharmacies may lend a false credibility to this product by normalizing tobacco use. To our knowledge there is no evidence supporting the argument that selling tobacco increases the effectiveness or reach of cessation advice and health education activities.

Many institutions within British Columbia have advocated for the elimination of pharmacy tobacco sales, including the Canadian Cancer Society, the BC Lung Association, Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon, and the Health Officers Council of BC. Regulation is overdue and we hope that you will continue to proceed down this path even in the presence of open hostility and opposition from pharmacy (tobacco) retailers and their threats of litigation.

The Health Officers Council of BC supports the College of Pharmacists of BC whole-heartedly in its efforts to protect the health of British Columbians, particularly to prevent and limit tobacco smoking which significantly contributes to poor health outcomes. The Health Officers Council of BC offers any further assistance it can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charl', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Charl Badenhorst, MD
Chair Health Officers Council
BSc, BScHons, BScHons (Epi & Biostats), MMedSc, MBChB