

May 27, 2024

The Honourable Mark Holland
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
mark.holland@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Holland:

RE: Restricting Youth Access to Nicotine Pouches

On behalf of the Board of Health for North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Ontario, please accept this correspondence highlighting our concern about nicotine pouches and their availability and potential harm to youth. Nicotine pouches under the brand name “Zonnic” were authorized for sale by Health Canada under their *Natural Health Products* designation as a nicotine replacement therapy. Nicotine pouches fall outside the scope of the federal *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act* and the provincial *Smoke-free Ontario Act 2017*, which regulate tobacco and vaping products by restricting their advertisement, promotion, and youth access. As a result, they are being sold in various retail settings throughout Ontario with no regulated age restrictions whilst being promoted using colourful packaging, “Power Wall” advertising, and multiple flavours which appeal to youth.

On March 20, 2024, Health Canada issued a [statement](#) and [public advisory](#) acknowledging concern about nicotine replacement therapies, particularly nicotine pouches becoming popular with youth. Health Canada released a [Notice of Intent](#) on March 21, 2024, to explore legislative and regulatory options to protect youth from risks associated with access and appeal to such nicotine replacement therapy.

At its meeting on April 24, 2024, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #BOH/2024/04/08:

WHEREAS, Health Canada approved Zonnic nicotine pouches as a smoking cessation aid under their Natural Health Products designation;

WHEREAS, nicotine pouch sales have no age restrictions and minimal advertising restrictions as they fall outside the scope of the federal Tobacco and Vaping Products Act;

WHEREAS, Imperial Tobacco, the makers of Zonnic, are using marketing tactics such as “Power Wall” displays in convenient stores, colorful packaging and fun flavors to attract youth;

WHEREAS, nicotine is highly addictive and can permanently impact the developing brain in youth and young adults;

.../2

Your lifetime partner in healthy living.
Votre partenaire à vie pour vivre en santé.

myhealthunit.ca

📍 345 Oak Street West,
North Bay, ON P1B 2T2

📞 1-800-563-2808
705-474-1400

📠 705-474-8252

📍 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2L7

📞 1-800-563-2808
705-746-5801

📠 705-746-2711

WHEREAS, Zonnic is been sold throughout Ontario in various retail settings and has been since October 2023.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that until the federal regulatory gap is closed the Board of Health urges the Ontario government to take immediate steps to restrict youth access to these products by amending provincial regulation to require that nicotine pouches, like Zonnic, be only available for purchase at pharmacies and kept behind the counter; and

FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED, that that until the regulatory gap is closed the Board of Health urges the federal government to take immediate steps to restrict youth access to these products by:

- Suspending the sale of nicotine pouches, or reclassifying nicotine pouches (including flavored pouches) as a prescription product available only behind the counter at pharmacies; and*
- establishing a temporary moratorium of approval of any more nicotine pouch products, or any new category of nicotine products, under the Natural Health Product Regulations, unless the products are sold on a prescription basis.*

The Board of Health respectfully urges the Federal Government to implement measures that immediately reduce access to nicotine pouches and help to prevent negative health outcomes in youth.

Sincerely,

Rick Champagne
Chairperson, Board of Health



Rick Champagne (Jun 14, 2024 13:31 EDT)

Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer



Dr. Carol Zimbalatti (Jun 3, 2024 14:10 EDT)

/sb

Copy to:

Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Sylvia Jones, Ontario Minister of Health
Vic Fedeli, MPP, Nipissing
Graydon Smith, MPP, Parry Sound-Muskoka
John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane

Scott Aitchison, MP, Parry Sound – Muskoka
Anthony Rota, MP, Nipissing – Timiskaming
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHA)
Health Unit Member Municipalities