



STATEMENT ON E-CIGARETTES

May 2014

The production, sale and use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are rapidly increasing in Canada and many other jurisdictions. A number of jurisdictions, including several US municipalities, have banned their use in public places and/or banned sales to minors. At the same time, research into their safety, use patterns, effectiveness as a cessation aid, and their potential to promote dual use of both e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes, remains limited. Two recent research documents looking at the e-cigarette phenomenon are the May 2014 scientific review of e-cigarette studies published in the journal *Circulation*¹ and the May 2014 *Tobacco Control* supplement, in which scientists with the FDA Center for Tobacco Products summarize the current research and identify research gaps.² Both publications note the lack of definitive research findings.

OCAT has reviewed these and other documents – including the NSRA/SHAF's recent position statement on the e-cigarette issue³ – and agree that the current research deficit does not permit us to formulate a comprehensive, evidence-based set of conclusions about the position of e-cigarettes in society.

We recognize the many concerns expressed in the literature to date, as well as some researchers' belief that e-cigarettes have potential to help smokers cut down or quit. Given the uncertainty regarding both the composition of the vapour exhaled by e-cigarette users and the health risks to non-users of inhaling these chemicals, which may include nicotine, as well as the many questions about the potential that e-cigarettes will serve as a gateway to nicotine addiction and possibly tobacco use among young people, OCAT has adopted the following interim position on the e-cigarette issue:

- E-cigarette sales to minors should be banned in the absence of evidence that e-cigarettes do not present a risk to young people's health and that e-cigarette use does not increase the risk of tobacco use initiation among young people.
- Youth-friendly flavourings in all types of e-cigarette cartridges and e-liquids should be banned in light of data showing that tens of thousands of Ontario youth use flavoured tobacco products of one kind or another.
- OCAT also recommends that e-cigarette use in all public places and workplaces be banned, in parallel with the ban on smoking in workplaces and public places mandated under the 2006 *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* and in light of the many unknowns about the health risks of exposure to second-hand e-cigarette vapour, and the impact that widespread e-cigarette use in public places and workplaces could have on smoking initiation and cessation.
- Finally, OCAT recommends that apart from any e-cigarette product that may at some future point be approved by Health Canada, point-of-sale advertising and promotion not be permitted in light of the ban on retail tobacco displays both on and behind counters and elsewhere in retail locations.

We wish to stress that in our view, these are minimum interim steps that should be taken in the province of Ontario. We also stress that these measures should be revisited if and when there is sufficient high quality scientific research indicating that e-cigarettes are an effective cessation aid and/or that they pose little risk to the health of users or the public.

¹ Grana R, et al. E-Cigarettes: A Scientific Review. *Circulation*, 2014; 129:1972-1986.

² *Tobacco Control*. May 2014, Volume 23, suppl 2.

³ Position Statement on Electronic Cigarettes. Non-Smokers' Rights Association/Smoking and Health Action Foundation, November 2013.

Founding Agencies

Canadian Cancer Society
Ontario Division

Heart and Stroke
Foundation of Ontario

Non-Smokers'
Rights Association

Ontario Medical Association

Supporting Agencies

Association of Local
Public Health Agencies

Cancer Care Ontario

Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

Ontario Association of
Naturopathic Doctors

Ontario Federation of Home
and School Associations

Ontario Physical and Health
Education Association

Ontario Public Health
Association

Physicians for a
Smoke-Free Canada

Registered Nurses
Association of Ontario

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of Family Physicians

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