



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer



February 6, 2024

The Honourable Sherry Wilson, M.L.A.
Minister of Women's Equality, Addictions and Mental Health Services
HSBC Place
520 King Street
Fredericton, NB E3B 6G3

The Honourable Bruce Fitch, M.L.A.
Minister of Health
HSBC Place
520 King Street Floor: 5
Fredericton, NB E3B 6G3

Dear Minister Wilson and Minister Fitch,

Re: Zonic has exposed crucial gaps

On behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society, Heart & Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Medical Society and NB Lung, we are writing to **bring your attention to a new front in the war against nicotine addiction**; as you may be aware, the tobacco industry has taken advantage of a loophole in federal regulations to market and promote a new kind of flavoured nicotine to Canadian children.

With this letter, we ask for your support in the national effort to encourage the federal government to take immediate steps to restrict youth access to this product until such time as the appropriate regulatory framework has been developed.

Two administrative decisions on the part of Health Canada have **resulted in a tobacco company receiving approval to sell flavoured nicotine pouches in all kinds of retail settings with no age restrictions and minimal advertising restrictions.** The impact of these decisions became apparent in mid-October when Zonic appeared in stores across New Brunswick. **With flavours including Berry Frost, Chill Mint and Topic Breeze, colourful packaging and in-store promotion and an accompanying online lifestyle marketing campaign, it is clear this product is designed to appeal to youth.** There is also evidence of an American version with higher nicotine levels, known as 'Zyn,' being illegally sold in Canada.

The introduction of Zonic has exposed crucial gaps in federal regulations and provincial governments have not had time to prepare their own legislative or regulatory response. Therefore, the federal government is being asked to take two immediate steps:

- to reclassify nicotine pouches as a prescription product, or to suspend the sale of nicotine pouches until the regulatory gap is closed
- to establish a temporary moratorium of approval of any more nicotine pouch products, or any new category of nicotine products, under the Natural Health Product Regulations, until the regulatory gap is closed, unless the products are sold on a prescription basis.

Only five years after the federal legalization of vaping products in 2018, we are once again scrambling to respond to a federal regulatory environment which is facilitating youth nicotine addiction. Unless the federal government moves quickly, we could see extensive youth use of this new product.

We ask for your support in conveying the urgency of this request to the federal Ministers of Health and of Mental Health and Addictions. We are confident that they both have a role to play in taking action on an urgent basis.

Thank you in advance for your support of this effort.

Sincerely,



Lana Randell
Senior Advocacy
Coordinator
Canadian Cancer Society



Dr. Kerrie Luck
Vice President, Policy
and Research
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Nora Lacey
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