



Médecins *pour* Canada sans fumée  
Physicians *for* Smoke-Free Canada

## **It's time to force pharmacies to stop selling cigarettes**

### **British Columbia and Manitoba are the only Canadian provinces to allow tobacco sales in pharmacies**

OTTAWA, WINNIPEG, VANCOUVER--(Marketwire - May 26, 2010) - On the week leading up to World No Tobacco Day, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada is calling on the government of British Columbia and Manitoba to bring their public health laws up to the standards of other Canadian provinces and to ban the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies.

"Tobacco kills. Selling tobacco in pharmacies gives false and dangerous credibility to cigarettes," states Dr. Milan Khara Clinical Director of the VCH Tobacco Dependence Clinic and member of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada "Tobacco is not compatible with health and the role of the pharmacist is not compatible with that of tobacco vendor."

"We can no longer allow the role of the pharmacist to be compromised by large chain stores who cannot decide if they want to be part of the solution or part of the problem," said Murray Gibson, Executive Director of the Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance (MANTRA). "It is time for legislative action to protect the integrity of our health professionals and the health of the public."

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada has campaigned since the early 1990s for an end to the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies. The first Canadian province to adopt legislation to end this harmful practice was Ontario, where the ban came into effect in early 1995. In the past 15 years, New Brunswick (1997), Quebec (1998), Nova Scotia (2000), Nunavut (2004), Newfoundland and Labrador (2005), Prince Edward Island (2006), Northwest Territories (2007), Alberta (2009) and Saskatchewan (2010) have amended their laws and practices.

In its review of Health Canada data of pharmacist counseling of smokers, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada found no support for the pharmacies' argument that selling cigarettes was one way to encourage smokers to seek counseling from pharmacists about ways to quit. During the most recent survey year (2008), tobacco was sold in pharmacies in the four western provinces. In those provinces where tobacco sales were permitted, smokers were LESS likely to speak with a pharmacist about quitting (40% vs. 52%).

"The refusal of British Columbia and Manitoba to protect the interests of individual pharmacists and the health of their communities and to yield to pressure from the large chain drug stores is a black mark for government," said Cynthia Callard, Executive Director of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada. "There is no reason but commercial greed and political weakness to explain the continued sale of tobacco in pharmacies in British Columbia and Manitoba."

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Background factsheets:

Tobacco Free Pharmacies:

[http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng\\_home/2010/pharmacy-backgrounder-2010.pdf](http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng_home/2010/pharmacy-backgrounder-2010.pdf)

Pharmacist counselling to support smokers' quitting.

Findings from the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, 2008.

[http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng\\_home/2010/Pharmacy%20Sales.pdf](http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng_home/2010/Pharmacy%20Sales.pdf)

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