



**HEART &
STROKE**
FOUNDATION



COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Safe and Effective Pharmacy Care



THE **+** LUNG ASSOCIATION™
British Columbia

January 13, 2012

Honourable Christy Clark
Premier
Province of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Clark:

Subject: National Non-Smoking Week - Tobacco Control in BC

We are writing to express our ongoing concern and ask for your government to take definitive and rapid action on a public health issue that we feel is long overdue in being addressed: the selling of tobacco products in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies.

We applaud your government for its commitment to healthy living and tobacco control initiatives, most recently the BC Smoking Cessation Program. However, we continue to urge you and your government to ban the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products in BC pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies, which is incompatible to the positive living messages under your Families First initiative, and especially to the government's Smoking Cessation Program.

Continuing to allow cigarettes and other tobacco products to be sold in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies sends a conflicting message to the public, especially to those struggling with tobacco addiction who visit pharmacies for health products and tobacco cessation treatments and counselling. By allowing the sale of tobacco in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies where cessation products are offered, the government is undermining the very message and public health goal it is trying to achieve. The presence of tobacco products in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies also provides a dangerous temptation to the smokers who are trying to quit by having cigarettes and other tobacco products available at the front retail section, which the smoker must pass through to get to the dispensary at the back to access their smoking cessation medications.

BC is one of only two provinces in Canada that allows cigarettes and other deadly tobacco products to be sold in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies. Outside of BC, it is practically unheard of that pharmacies would sell cigarettes. Here, BC lags behind most other jurisdictions, a sad situation for a province that has a history of being a global leader in tobacco control issues. Public support for banning tobacco sales in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies is high - at 71% - and the practice of selling it is almost universally opposed by pharmacists themselves.

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Pharmacies are publicly recognized as dependable health-promoting venues where tobacco does not belong. The role of the pharmacist as one of the most accessible and trusted health care providers in our communities is incompatible with that of a tobacco vendor. It is incongruous that approximately half of the province's pharmacies continue to sell tobacco when it is well known that it causes death and disease.

We urge you and your government to implement legislation that will see the removal of tobacco from pharmacies including larger retail locations containing a pharmacy and align British Columbia with the rest of Canada.

Now, more than ever, is the time to remove BC's number one death and disease causing product from our pharmacies and make the BC Smoking Cessation Program even more effective. Now is the time to put families and the health of communities first and end the sale of tobacco in pharmacies and stores containing pharmacies.

Yours truly,

Handwritten signature of Diego Marchese in black ink.

Diego Marchese
Chief Executive Officer
Heart and Stroke Foundation
BC & Yukon

Handwritten signature of Suzanne M. Solven in black ink.

Suzanne M. Solven
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Handwritten signature of Scott McDonald in black ink.

Scott McDonald
President & CEO
BC Lung Association