

Health Canada and Imperial Tobacco Canada meeting: Vaping – August 22, 2019

Subject:

Meeting to discuss some of their recent data and market observations and share details of their youth vaping prevention program [vaping]

Date:

August 22, 2019

Participants:

Health Canada (HC)

- James Van Loon
 - Director General, Tobacco Control Directorate (TCD) (Chair)
- Mathew Cook
 - Acting Director , Tobacco Products Regulatory Office, TCD
- Michel Blanchard
 - Acting Director, Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, TCD
- Manager, Stakeholder Relations and International Policy, TCD
- Manager, Business Intelligence Division, Office of Research and Surveillance, TCD

- Senior Policy Analyst, Stakeholder Relations and International Policy, TCD
- Manager, Risk Management Strategies Division, Risk Management Bureau, Consumer and Hazardous Products Safety Directorate (CHPSD)
- Unit Head, Risk Management Strategies Division, Risk Management Bureau, Consumer and Hazardous Products Safety Directorate (CHPSD)

Imperial Tobacco Canada (ITC)

- Eric Gagnon
 - Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs
- Gavin Mullard
 - Senior Scientific Engagement Manager

Introduction:

A meeting was held at the request of ITC to discuss some of their recent data and market observations and share details of their youth vaping prevention program.

The Chair opened the meeting by doing round table introductions.

The Chair reminded participants that this meeting is subject to disclosure as per HC's [Openness and Transparency policies](#). In the interest of transparency, the department stated that it would be making a record of the meeting publicly available. A copy of the [handling of information and privacy notice](#) was mentioned and acknowledged.

HC also referred to Article 5.3 of the [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#), its international obligation to protect tobacco control policies from the vested interests of the tobacco industry.

Subjects:

Vaping trends and insights

ITC stated that it is aligned with Canada's position that vaping is a less harmful alternative to smoking. ITC acknowledged that there is a problem with youth vaping and has taken steps to address the issue. ITC indicated that actions to protect youth should not be taken at the detriment of current smokers and measures should focus on access and enforcement.

ITC provided its interpretation of vaping trends and highlighted inconsistencies in age segmentation, smoking/vaping behaviour characterization and country comparisons among studies.

Youth prevention and age verification enforcement program

ITC highlighted its interventions to respond to the youth vaping issue. ITC stated that most of its products are sold in convenience stores which are experienced in preventing the sale of certain products to youth. For online access, ITC uses third party age verification prior to accepting sales and proof of identification at the time of delivery which must match that of the purchaser. ITC explained that the third party age verification system works with Equifax and requires a credit card and other personal information to validate. ITC also indicated that it prohibits bulk orders. ITC recommended this as a standard for the vaping industry.

HC asked ITC about costs per verification, the percentage of sales in convenience stores vs. online and what constitutes a bulk order. ITC indicated that it would return with that information.

ITC concluded the discussion by informing HC that it launched an education campaign and is delivering training to retailers to ensure that no sales are made to those who are underage.

Role of flavours and consumer safety

ITC stated that flavours are critical in helping smokers switch to vaping products and noted that even nicotine replacement therapies incorporate flavours.

ITC discussed its product quality and safety stewardship on e-liquids. ITC indicated that their products are manufactured and comply with EU requirements. As such, pharmaceutical-grade nicotine and food-grade flavourings and ingredients are used in e-liquids. ITC also noted that they follow a step-by-step process for all ingredients and that any additives that are classified as being carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction are prohibited.

ITC indicated that it would share the European requirements for product quality in which they are required to comply with.

ITC concluded the discussion on flavours by expressing concern that some provinces may proceed with provincial flavour bans. ITC stated that banning flavours would have a negative impact on current smokers who may wish to switch to vaping products.

Nicotine control and consumer satisfaction

ITC discussed the role of nicotine and consumer satisfaction. ITC stated that there are many considerations with respect to nicotine including: diverse human behaviours (e.g., the difference in nicotine uptake depending on puff behaviour, difference of new vs. experienced users), diversity in devices and delivery (e.g., open vs. closed products), product familiarization (e.g., behaviours are adapted over time) and concluded that a range is required given the variables.

Effective communication on vaping and reducing tobacco use

ITC stated that effective communication is necessary to reduce tobacco use and is opposed to measures that would prevent communication at point of sale. ITC recommended that there is an opportunity at point of sale to ask current smokers whether they are aware that there is a less harmful alternative. ITC notes that limiting communication to vape shops will be ineffective since the consumer has likely already switched to vaping products.

Conclusion:

The meeting was then concluded.

Documents:

- N/A