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Tobacco Position Statement

Board Approved • July 28, 2006

Pharmacists and tobacco products

B.C. pharmacists are opposed to the use of tobacco products.

Pharmacists, as health professionals, recognize the health hazards connected with smoking. The adverse health consequences are well documented and widely understood. Many pharmacists and pharmacies in British Columbia offer smoking cessation clinics. Pharmacists are very supportive and frequently very successful in assisting patients who are looking for help to stop smoking.

Sale of tobacco products in regulated pharmacy areas

The College of Pharmacists regulates the area of retail operations where drugs or devices may be stored, dispensed or sold to the public and this area is known as the regulated pharmacy area. In any retail operation that contains a pharmacy, within the regulated pharmacy area it is clear to the consumer that they are in an area staffed with health professionals and containing products concerned with caring for their health.

Tobacco products are not displayed, stored or sold in the regulated pharmacy area of pharmacies in British Columbia.

Sale of tobacco products in retail operations that have pharmacies

The issue of concern that has received attention in British Columbia over the years is the sale of tobacco products elsewhere (that is, other than the dispensary) within a retail operation that contains a pharmacy. Such sales have been banned in many provinces in Canada. A similar ban for B.C. retailers has been advocated by the College of Pharmacists, and has recently been the subject of a private members bill in the B.C. legislature. In addition, many retail operations containing pharmacies have voluntarily withdrawn tobacco products from their operations.

On this aspect of the issue, BCPhA takes the position that the choice to sell tobacco products, or not, is a business decision made in the context of the business operations that do not involve the health care setting (i.e. the dispensary), and do not involve the pharmacy professional staff. The trend towards inclusion of pharmacies within very large retail operations means that the sale of tobacco products and the dispensary may be physically well-separated from each other within the store. Additionally, such retail operations offer a wide range of products that do not relate to health promotion, but are nonetheless widely used and widely available consumer products.

position statement

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The BCPhA takes the position that all retailers should be regulated in the same manner with respect to sale and availability of legal consumer products.

BCPhA Position Statement

- The BCPhA supports pharmacists in their promotion of health and disease prevention. It supports and encourages pharmacist-supported smoking cessation products and programs.
- The BCPhA supports and encourages the voluntary withdrawal of tobacco products from retail outlets that contain pharmacies in British Columbia.
- The BCPhA opposes selective regulation of the sale of tobacco products that targets retail operations containing a pharmacy.

