

ASH NEWS RELEASE

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ASH APPLAUDS MAZANKOWSKI'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOBACCO REDUCTION

Action on Smoking & Health applauds the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health as they relate to tobacco use reduction. Today, the Council released its long-anticipated report on the future of healthcare in Alberta. Included in the report are a number of recommendations to keep Albertans healthy, including comprehensive action on tobacco use.

The report urges the Alberta government to take concerted, sustained action to reduce tobacco use and to earmark funds from increased tobacco taxes to fund these activities and other health promotion initiatives.

Specifically, the report recommends the following initiatives to reduce or eliminate tobacco use:

Taxation of tobacco products with the revenue applied to tobacco reduction programs and other wellness initiatives.

Regulation of tobacco advertising and promotion, especially programs targeted at youth.

Clean air regulations to prevent smoking in public establishments.

Intensive mass media campaigns against smoking.

Restrictions on sales to minors.

Stop-smoking treatment and counseling.

Mandatory health education on tobacco use in Alberta schools.

Community-based tobacco reduction activities.

"If fully adopted, the Council's recommendations would place Alberta on the leading edge of tobacco control in Canada" said Dr. Roger Hodkinson, honorary chairman. "More importantly, the proposed strategies will significantly reduce the disease burden resulting from tobacco use in our province" he added. "We urge the Alberta government to adopt these recommendations in their entirety as soon as possible".

"We are particularly pleased with the policy recommendations in the report, including the call for dedicated tobacco tax increases, restrictions on advertising and promotion, and regulations to ban smoking in public establishments" said Les Hagen, executive director. "Although the report does not include every element of a comprehensive tobacco reduction strategy, the adoption of the recommendations would be an excellent first step for the Alberta government" he added.

Tobacco use is the primary preventable cause of disease and premature death, killing 3,400 Albertans annually. One in every five deaths are caused by tobacco use in Alberta.

ASH is Western Canada's leading health organization devoted solely to tobacco control and prevention.

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