
News Release Communiqué

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Youth launch national campaign to change tobacco act Northwestern Youth Action Alliance Wants to See *Flavour... Gone!*

WINNIPEG - Youth from Northwestern Ontario's Youth Action Alliance (^{NW}YAA) announced today the launch of **Flavour...Gone!** a youth-led campaign for changes to the federal *Tobacco Act*. The youth gathered at the Radisson in downtown Winnipeg to bring awareness to the need to ban flavoured tobacco products, which they feel are being marketed directly at youth.

Catherine Kiewning, co-organizer of the ^{NW}YAA event, says "Even though there has been great progress on tobacco control in Canada we need to get rid of flavoured tobacco products in order to protect youth. The colourful packaging and the attractive and aromatic smell of these products make them seem no more harmful than candy when really they are just as deadly as cigarettes."

Co-organizer Sam McKibbin adds "I don't think any one who sees the flavoured tobacco products like cigarillos and chew tobacco that are on the shelves of Canadian stores can fail to see that they would be especially attractive to youth."

During the event, the youth campaigners presented a certificate of recognition to NDP Health Critic Judy Wasylycia-Leis for her work in parliament on this important issue. On June 16, 2008 Wasylycia-Leis introduced Private Members Bill C-566 to amend the *Tobacco Act* to ban the production of flavoured tobacco products and to require tighter regulation for cigarillos.

"Targeting youth with these deadly products is absolutely appalling," said Wasylycia-Leis. "My bill will strengthen the Tobacco Act and slam the door shut on this growing threat. This campaign and youth support for my bill is great news, and shows just how important this issue is for the youth themselves."

The ^{NW}YAA youth were joined by Dr. Dhali Dhaliwal, Chair of the Board of Directors of MANTRA (Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance Inc.), as well as youth from Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and Ottawa all supporting the call for government action the issue. Additional groups of youth sent banners of support that were displayed at the launch.

The youth followed up today's press conference with a street marketing campaign moving from downtown to the Forks. Educational postcards and buttons were distributed directing people to their newly created website for the campaign www.flavourgone.ca.

The ^{NW}YAA, a youth development program of the Northwestern Health Unit, plan to continue to contact youth and tobacco advocacy groups around the country. They want youth across Canada to go and talk to their local MP to educate them about flavoured tobacco products and to ask for

their public support for Bill C-566 or similar regulatory change that will ban flavours in tobacco products.

The latest Canadian statistics on tobacco use show cigarillo sales jumped from less than 50,000 units in 2001 to more than 80 million units in 2006 – the period when colourful, flavoured products hit the market. For further information, please find attached a backgrounder on cigarillo smoking in Canada and a copy of Bill C-566.

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This release is also available on the Internet at www.flavourgone.ca.



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