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A Healthier Future for Young Lungs in Ontario

Ontario Lung Association welcomes new tobacco, e-cigarette legislation

Toronto, ON – The Ontario Lung Association is celebrating the promise of healthier lungs and better breathing for young Ontarians delivered today by the Associate Minister for Health and Long-Term Care, Dipika Damerla, as she introduced new tobacco and e-cigarette legislation.

“We applaud these strong new measures designed to protect our children and youth from becoming addicted to tobacco and from the potential harmful effects of e-cigarettes,” said George Habib, president and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association.

“By continuing to strengthen and refine the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, the government is meeting its responsibility to protect young people, and all Ontarians, from the terrible consequences of tobacco addiction, the number one cause of preventable illness and death in our province.”

The new legislation will ban the sale of flavoured tobacco products, including menthol, and increase the maximum fine for selling tobacco to minors. The sale and use of e-cigarettes will be subject to tighter controls, including: a ban on sales to anyone under 19 and in places where the sale of tobacco is prohibited; a ban on using e-cigarettes in places where smoking is prohibited.

“The Lung Association is particularly pleased with the decision to include menthol in the ban on flavoured tobaccos, which are products specifically designed to encourage young people to take up smoking,” said Habib.

The Lung Association calls on the Ontario government to reinforce the new legislation by expanding the availability of effective cessation tools and support programs for people who want to quit smoking. The government should also move rapidly to further increase taxes on cigarettes and tobacco products to a level that is equal to or higher than the average tax imposed in other provinces.

“Smoking rates in Ontario have fallen but they are still too high,” said Habib. “All available tools and resources must be deployed in our efforts to eliminate the scourge of tobacco addiction once and for all.”