



Heart & Stroke Government of Ontario Pre-Budget Submission

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Heart & Stroke Ontario Pre-Budget Submission 2020

Executive Summary of Recommendations

1. Invest in the FAST Signs of Stroke campaign to reduce the impact of stroke

Heart & Stroke asks that the Government of Ontario commit to a continued investment of \$1 million per year for the next three years for the FAST Signs of Stroke public awareness campaign.

2. Institute a tax on vaping products to help reduce youth vaping

Heart & Stroke urges the Government of Ontario to implement a value-added tax on all vaping products in order to help end the crisis of youth vaping.

3. Implement a cost recovery fee on tobacco products to create revenue for tobacco control programs

Heart & Stroke recommends that the tobacco industry be required to fund tobacco prevention, cessation and enforcement programs through a cost-recovery fee, in order to alleviate the burden of those costs on the taxpayer.

4. Allocate funds to create an AED registry as outlined in Bill 141, the *Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2019*

Heart & Stroke strongly supports the creation of an AED registry, as outlined in Bill 141, “Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2019,” tabled by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health Robin Martin. We urge the Government of Ontario allocate the funding necessary to ensure the creation of this registry.

Preventing and reducing the impact of stroke

Stroke is a medical emergency with serious consequences for individuals, their families and the health care system. It is the third leading cause of deathⁱ and the leading cause of severe disability and hospitalization.ⁱⁱ In Ontario in 2016-17, there were 39,755 visits to the emergency department and 21,065 hospitalizations for stroke.ⁱⁱⁱ An estimated 170,000 individuals in Ontario are living with the consequences of stroke.^{iv}

Time = Brain
1.9 million brain cells die for every minute that treatment is delayed.

Delays in stroke treatment can result in cognitive impairment, paralysis, communication and vision problems, memory loss and other long-term complications. Delays can also result in longer hospital stays, and greater need for rehabilitation. Conversely, the faster an individual is treated, the better the individual's chance of full recovery, and the lower the burden of treatment and rehabilitation on the health care system.

The Ontario stroke system is one of the best in the world, but it depends on people recognizing the signs of stroke and calling 9-1-1 immediately to be directed to the nearest stroke centre. Cutting-edge treatments need to be administered quickly to allow for the best possible recovery.

\$3.6 billion
Annual cost to the Canadian economy in physician services, hospital costs, lost wages and decreased productivity

Each twenty-minute reduction in treatment delays leads to a gain of an average of three months of disability-free life.^v This is why the FAST signs of stroke campaign is critical to raise awareness among Ontarians.



Learn the signs of stroke

Face
is it drooping?

Arms
can you raise both?

Speech
is it slurred or jumbled?

Time
to call 9-1-1 right away.

Act **FAST** because the quicker you act, the more of the person you save.

heartandstroke.ca/FAST

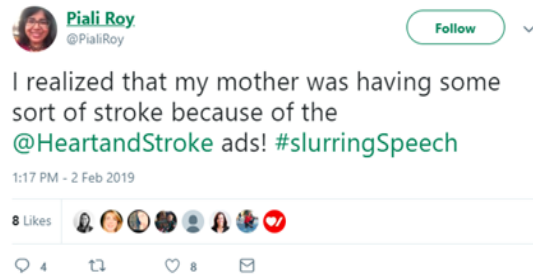
Funding provided by the Government of Ontario



Our recent campaign received excellent results:

- The number of people who could identify all three signs of stroke grew by **117%** from pre- to post-campaign testing.
- People in the post-campaign survey who recalled seeing the ad were three times more likely to identify all three signs of stroke.
- Through TV, social, digital, print and earned media tactics the most recent campaign reached over **59,571,484 impressions** in Ontario.

The impact of the campaign is borne out by the frequent appreciative messages our team receives from Ontarians who knew to act fast and call 9-1-1 when their loved one showed stroke symptoms as a result of the FAST campaign. We are proud to have collaborated with the Government of Ontario on this campaign and hope we can continue our work with the government on this important initiative.



Recommendation # 1

We ask that the Government of Ontario **commit to a continued investment of \$1 million per year over the next three years for the FAST Signs of Stroke public awareness campaign.**

Preventing youth vaping

The use of e-cigarettes (vaping) among youth is a rapidly escalating problem in Ontario. Thirty-four percent of grade 7-12 students in Canada report having ever tried an e-cigarette and 20% report current use.^{vi} Another recent study found a 74% increase of current vape use among older teenagers in Canada over one year.^{vii}

Using e-cigarettes every day almost doubles the risk for heart attack.

E-cigarettes are both appealing and accessible to youth. According to Canadian student surveys from 2016-17, majority of students indicated it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get an e-cigarette if they wanted one.^{viii} Meanwhile, evidence of the physical harms presented by vaping is mounting; nicotine can damage the developing brain,^{ix x} and vaping is linked to respiratory and cardiovascular disease.^{xi xii xiii}

Emerging evidence also indicates that there is potential for vaping to be a gateway to tobacco,^{xiv xv} cannabis^{xvi} and nicotine addiction.^{xvii xviii} Flavoured e-cigarettes play a huge role in enticing youth to vape, encouraging habitual use,^{xix} and possibly initiating tobacco use.^{xx} One study has shown that the odds of subsequent cigarette smoking were quadrupled among e-cigarette users who were otherwise at low risk of smoking.^{xxi}

One pod of the most popular vape brand contains as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

We are seeing a new generation of young people becoming addicted to nicotine, potentially putting their lives at risk and placing

a significant burden on the health care system. Accordingly, **we urge the Government of Ontario to take the necessary steps to minimize this growing epidemic by implementing a value added tax on all vaping products.** A value added tax between 20-30% would increase the price enough to help keep e-cigarettes out of reach for youth, while not discouraging adult smokers from switching from cigarettes.

There are significant learnings from years of research that demonstrates that youth are very sensitive to price increases to tobacco products.^{xxii xxiii xxiv} Specifically, higher cigarette prices have been shown to prevent youth initiation,^{xxv} prevent adolescents from becoming daily, addicted smokers and can impact the smoking behaviour of youth who are further along the smoking uptake continuum.^{xxvi}

A tax on vaping products has already been approved by British Columbia, with Alberta and PEI committing to instituting a vaping tax in their Spring 2020 budgets. The state of Massachusetts has applied a 75% tax at the wholesale level. This public health crisis requires a significant government response and commitment of taxpayer dollars and a tax on e-cigarettes will create a much-needed source of revenue for the Government of Ontario.

Recommendation # 2

To discourage price-sensitive youth from vaping and to recover costs associated with the youth vaping crisis, it is essential the Government of Ontario **implement a value added tax on all vaping products.**

Creating a tobacco cost recovery- fee

This year, the government of Ontario plans to invest \$44 million for enforcement, cessation and prevention programs to combat the devastating impacts of smoking. Currently, this cost is shouldered by the Government of Ontario and, by extension, the taxpayer. We recommend that, through a cost-recovery fee, the tobacco industry be required to pay for the cost of responding to this epidemic. Our recommendation is that the fee should generate \$44 million annually to offset the

Ontario's level of tobacco taxation is the second lowest in Canada

estimated cost of tobacco prevention and cessation programs and the enforcement of unregulated tobacco sales. This approach would be similar to the US Food and Drug Administration's tobacco strategy fee that recovers US \$712 million annually, and to the Canadian Cannabis Annual Regulatory Fee that will recover \$112 million annually by 2021-22. There are also cannabis cost recovery mechanisms in place in six provinces/territories (BC, MB, QC, NB, YT, NWT).

It is essential to note that if tobacco companies pass along the fee to customers through price increase, the impact would be invisible; the result would be an increase in retail prices of less than 0.1%. This is a small fraction of the price increases that industry has imposed over the last fifteen years, irrespective of taxation. Since 2013, the average wholesale cigarette price increased by 58.6% resulting in an extra \$20.86 per carton of 200 cigarettes. Federal excise increases over this period account for only \$6.80 while the remaining \$14.06 coming from industry mark up (see schedule A).

We recommend that this fee be based on each manufacturer's market share. This measure would be widely supported by Ontarians; in a January 2018 Ipsos-Reed Poll, 83% of Ontarians

supported measures to require tobacco companies to pay the costs of programs to reduce youth smoking. We appreciate that the government has inherited a difficult fiscal situation. A tobacco cost recovery fee would provide an opportunity to create a new source of revenue that would be widely publicly supported.

Recommendation # 3

Implement a cost recovery fee to offset the cost of tobacco cessation and prevention as well as enforcement of unregulated tobacco sales. This fee would require the tobacco industry to fund the cost of responding to the tobacco epidemic.

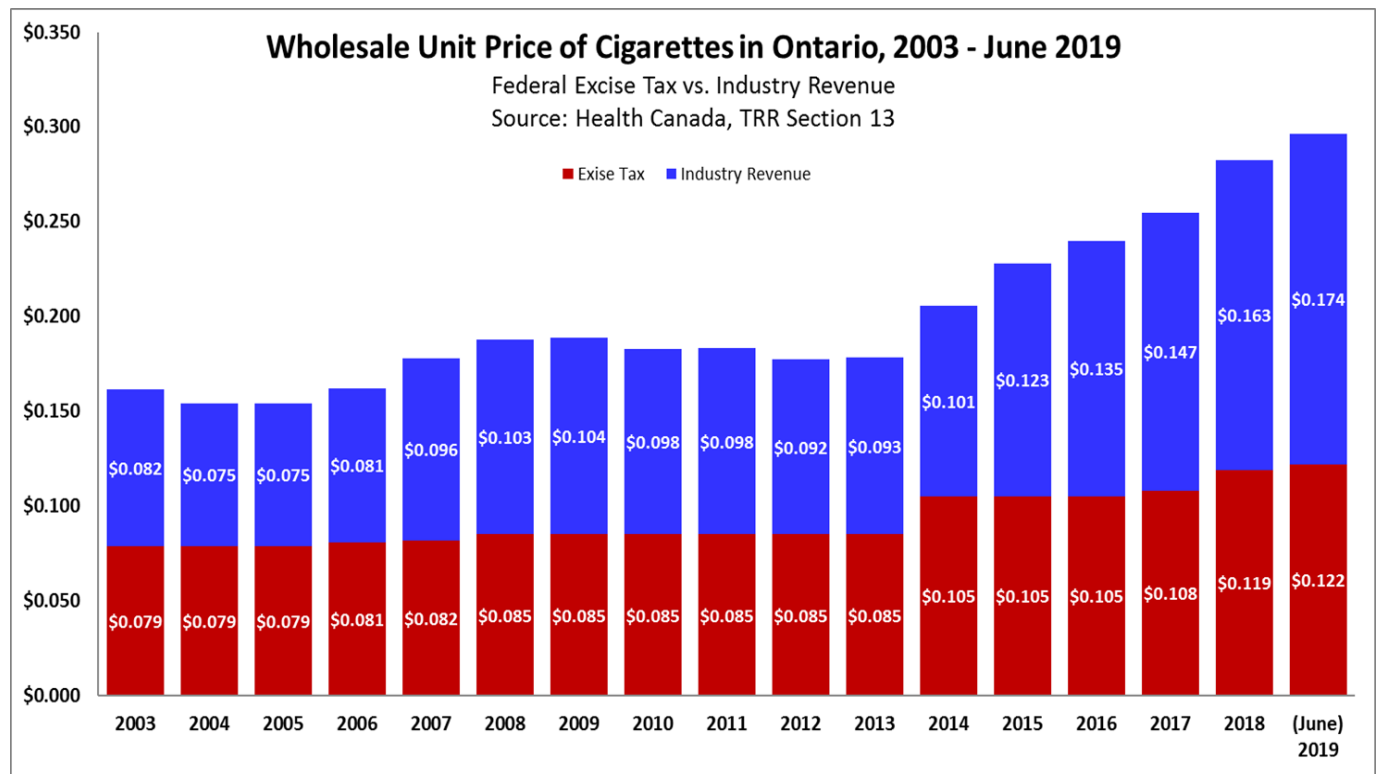
Creating an AED registry integrated with 9-1-1

Heart & Stroke Ontario strongly supports the creation of an AED registry for Ontario, as outlined in Bill 141, **the Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2019**, brought forward by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, Robin Martin. As public access to AEDs remains limited and a significant barrier for many, an AED registry can save the lives of those experiencing cardiac arrest. It is essential that the Government of Ontario allocate funding to ensure the successful implementation of legislation to create an AED registry once it is passed in the Legislature.

Recommendation # 4

Allocate the necessary funding to ensure the successful creation of an AED registry as outlined in Bill 141, the Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2019

Schedule A:



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- ⁱⁱⁱ Heart & Stroke’s analysis of data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information’s Discharge Abstract Database and National Ambulatory Care Reporting System for 2007–2017
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- ^v Neurology. 2017 May 30;88(22):21b3-2127. Epub 2017 Apr 28. Endovascular therapy for ischemic stroke: Save a minute-save a week. Meretoja , Keshtkaran , Tatlisumak , Donnan , Churilov.
- ^{vi} https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/sites/ca.canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/files/uploads/files/kt18_ecig_factsheet_on_final.pdf
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- ^{xii} National Academy of Sciences. Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes.; 2018. doi:10.17226/24952
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