

Grade	Evaluation	Description
A (4 points)	Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government action surpasses the recommendation</li> <li>Funding levels or tobacco control measures lead the country</li> </ul>
B (3 points)	Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minister's initial response to the recommendation was acceptable and timely</li> <li>Funding level and program/policy development have continued</li> </ul>
C (2 points)	Below Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current funding or policy does not meet tobacco control objectives, but government has engaged in some degree of action for recommendation</li> </ul>
D (1 point)	Unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current funding level/policy is at a low level compared to recommendation</li> <li>Health Minister or other government officials have stated publicly there will be action, but to date there has been minimal to none</li> </ul>
F (0 points)	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding levels are inadequate to reduce tobacco use</li> <li>Government has not moved forward with the recommendation and does not have plans to do so</li> </ul>

### TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Smoking is responsible for approximately one out of five deaths in Saskatchewan and costs our economy an estimated \$1.1 billion annually. (\$2008)

Evidence-based measures that form part of a comprehensive strategy could begin to reverse the burden of tobacco use. Funding for these measures should be provided through tobacco taxes and yet there seems to be little political will to invest the necessary funds required to address this serious public health issue. Until Saskatchewan makes tobacco control a greater priority, backed by a comprehensive strategy and adequate, sustained funding, the current piecemeal approach and inaction will lead to more disease, death and increased healthcare costs.

Based on current rates of tobacco use in Saskatchewan, tobacco control must become a far greater priority for the government. The three health organizations that commissioned this report are committed to working with the provincial government and other partners to reduce tobacco use and its burden on the health of Saskatchewan families and economy.



## Tobacco Control Progress Report

# REPORT CARD

## Analyzing the SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT'S Performance

YEAR: 2009 TO 2015

### TO THE CITIZENS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan's three largest health charities recently retained a consultant from out-of-province to grade the Saskatchewan government on its progress on 10 evidence-based tobacco control recommendations. These recommendations were made by the health organizations in 2009 and 2014. Using an A-F grading system (see back of card) the independent analysis shows that the province has acted on relatively few of the recommendations.

Of the recommendations the Saskatchewan government has addressed, it has only done so partially. Based on the following 10 tobacco control measures, the Saskatchewan government received an average grade of

D+



GRADE	RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS
A	<p><b>1. Control the sale of tax exempt and discount tobacco.</b></p> <p>Saskatchewan has implemented limits on the amount of tax-exempt tobacco to First Nations and increased tobacco taxes in 2010 and 2013. This action has increased tax revenue, reduced consumption and potentially reduced the number of tobacco users.</p>
C	<p><b>2. Initiate well-funded mass media campaigns to educate the public about the danger of using tobacco and to counter tobacco company marketing and promotional activities.</b></p> <p>The Saskatchewan government made good attempts at health communication campaigns, however they were far from comprehensive and their effect on smoking behaviour and attitude is unknown.</p>
B	<p><b>3. Prohibit smoking in motor vehicles when a person under the age of 19 is present.</b></p> <p>Saskatchewan implemented legislation banning smoking in motor vehicles with youth under the age of 16. Given that exposure to second-hand smoke among Saskatchewan children in cars has not decreased, it appears better enforcement is needed.</p>
D	<p><b>4. Support communities in their prevention and cessation efforts where smoking rates are very high.</b></p> <p>The last time funding was provided for community projects was in 2012-13. Not all of the projects were evaluated therefore there is no conclusive evidence that they changed behaviour.</p>
D	<p><b>5. Increase funding in the province's tobacco reduction strategy, <i>Building a Healthier Saskatchewan.</i></b></p> <p>Saskatchewan spends only \$0.40 cents per capita compared to the national average of \$3.65. This is not enough to put effective measures in place to reduce tobacco use and is one of the reasons Saskatchewan consistently has the highest smoking rates in the country. In 2013-14, the provincial government collected \$295 million in tobacco taxes.</p>

GRADE	RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS
F	<p><b>6. Adopt regulations around electronic cigarettes to prevent young people from using them and to prevent undermining of tobacco control.</b></p> <p>In the absence of federal legislation, seven provinces have brought forward legislation to regulate electronic cigarettes. Due to a lack of provincial leadership several Saskatchewan municipalities have taken action through municipal bylaws.</p>
D	<p><b>7. Banning smoking, including the use of water-pipes, in specific public places.</b></p> <p>Saskatchewan is lagging far behind almost all other provinces when it comes to protecting its citizens from second-hand smoke despite broad public support for more smoke-free outdoor spaces.</p>
F	<p><b>8. Ban the sale of flavoured tobacco product including menthol, to prevent youth from starting to smoke.</b></p> <p>Seven provinces have taken action to ban flavoured tobacco. Saskatchewan has not, nor has it even warned its citizens of the role of flavourings in making it easier to smoke and become addicted to nicotine.</p>
D	<p><b>9. Reduce the number of places where tobacco is sold.</b></p> <p>It is unacceptable that the only restriction on the sale of tobacco products is in pharmacies, hospitals and healthcare facilities. Saskatchewan has done nothing else to reduce the number or location of tobacco retailers, again lagging behind other provinces.</p>
C	<p><b>10. Helping people quit smoking, including subsidizing nicotine replacement therapy.</b></p> <p>The government is to be commended for training health professionals in cessation. Saskatchewan however does not subsidize NRT for people who want to quit smoking, even though it has been proven to be effective.</p>

An in-depth analysis of this report card is available online