



2023

Manitoba

Provincial Election
Policy Recommendations



Canadian
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2023 Manitoba provincial election policy recommendations

Thanks to critical investments in cancer research, better methods of detection and more effective treatments, people in Canada are living longer with cancer than ever before. Despite these advances, the number of people diagnosed with cancer is expected to increase dramatically in the years to come as the population grows and ages. An estimated 2 in 5 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime and about 1 in 4 will die from the disease.¹ By 2030, the number of new cancer cases diagnosed is expected to be 40% higher than it was in 2015.²

Manitoba is at a pivotal moment where the decisions to invest in our health and wellbeing today will fundamentally shape the future of our healthcare system for the years to come. The burden of cancer is growing, and we need to work together to develop innovative solutions that will benefit all Manitobans who will be impacted by cancer today and into the future.

Together, we can get better at preventing cancer and improving the quality of life of people impacted by cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society is asking for commitments from all political parties that will help prevent cancer and improve the quality of life of people impacted by the disease. Our recommendations include:

- 1) Improve equitable access to palliative care for all Manitobans regardless of where they live and in what setting they choose to receive care. We recommend:**
 - a) Developing and implementing a provincial palliative care framework.
 - b) Developing and supporting the expansion of community-based hospice and palliative care services for all Manitobans.
 - c) Standardize and improve palliative care education and training for healthcare providers, family caregivers and volunteers.

- 2) Implement cancer prevention policies that will prevent and reduce commercial tobacco use and youth vaping in Manitoba. We recommend:**
 - a) Raising the minimum age of purchase for commercial tobacco and vaping products to age 21.
 - b) Prohibiting the sale of flavored vaping products, except for tobacco-flavoured products.
 - c) Implementing a cost recovery fee on the tobacco industry to fund Manitoba's commercial tobacco and youth vaping prevention and reduction efforts.



Our Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Improve equitable access to palliative care for all Manitobans regardless of where they live and in what setting they choose to receive care.

Facing a life-limiting illness, especially in relation to pain and suffering, can cause great concern and hardship for people and families experiencing a life-limiting illness such as cancer. The goal of palliative care is to control symptoms, minimize pain and provide a sense of comfort and control at any stage of a life-limiting illness. It includes pain and symptoms management, skilled psychosocial, emotional and spiritual support, and comfortable living conditions with the appropriate level of care – at home, in hospice residences, in long-term care, in hospital or in any other setting of the person’s choice. Quality palliative care leads to better outcomes for people living with a life-limiting illness and their families and can reduce healthcare costs.^{3,4,5} Everyone with a life-limiting illness deserves the care, comfort, dignity and choice that palliative care provides. All Manitobans deserve equitable access to high-quality, culturally safe palliative care regardless of where they live and in what setting they choose to receive care.

Despite advances in cancer prevention and early detection, the number of people diagnosed with cancer is expected to increase dramatically as the population grows and ages.⁶ Palliative care was developed for and is still largely delivered to patients with advanced cancer - between 80–85% of patients receiving palliative care are people living with cancer.⁷ The growth in the number of cancer patients will lead to an increase in the number of people in Canada requiring palliative care.

We applaud the recent palliative care investments made by the Manitoba government.⁸ However, more resources are needed to ensure all Manitobans have access to the palliative care they need. We are encouraging further sustainable investments into community-based palliative care services over the long term. These investments are necessary so our healthcare system can get better at ensuring everyone in Manitoba has the support and comfort palliative care provides when and where they need it.

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends the following best practice, evidence-informed approaches aimed at ensuring all Manitobans have equitable access to high-quality, culturally safe palliative care regardless of where they live and in what setting they choose to receive care.

a) Develop and implement a provincial palliative care framework.

While improvements in access to quality palliative care have been made during the last decade, many Manitobans who require palliative care do not receive it or will not receive care in the setting of their choice and will die in an acute or emergency care setting.⁹ There is variation in availability of comprehensive palliative care across Manitoba which creates inequities throughout the province.¹⁰ Some of the existing barriers in accessing palliative care in Manitoba include limited access to community-based, culturally safe hospice palliative care, a lack of palliative care indicators required for quality care improvement, and standardized palliative care education for healthcare providers. These barriers result in Manitobans not receiving the support and comfort of palliative care where they need it and in what setting they choose to receive care.



The above barriers indicate that a fulsome framework is required to support improved access, coordination and quality improvement in palliative care in Manitoba. A framework could include: community-based palliative and hospice care programming development and expansion; supporting the integration of the palliative care approach into disease management healthcare services; providing standardized education and training for healthcare providers, patients, families, caregivers and volunteers; implementing communication approaches that increase awareness of the benefits of palliative care and advanced care planning; developing indicators and standards for palliative care across all settings of care; and implementing measurement, evaluation and research approaches.

b) Improve capacity and expand culturally safe community-based hospice and palliative care services for all Manitobans.

It is important that high-quality, culturally safe palliative care services are provided to all Manitobans so they receive the support and comfort of palliative care where they need it and in what setting they choose to receive care. Access to palliative care is not available equally throughout Manitoba.¹¹ Northern, remote and rural areas as well as Indigenous communities have limited access to high-quality, culturally safe palliative care, resulting in people leaving their community to receive the palliative care they need.¹² Improving capacity to deliver high-quality, culturally safe community-based palliative care services throughout Manitoba is needed to deliver an equitable system of care.

Increasing the capacity of home care to provide palliative care services along with improving and expanding community-based models which support local hospice, other community care facilities, and/or long-term care that utilizes a culturally safe palliative care approach, can reduce barriers for all Manitobans in accessing palliative care. This is particularly important for marginalized communities and groups who face greater barriers in accessing care.^{13,14,15} Providing high-quality, culturally safe community-based and in-home palliative care services will maintain community and cultural ties that are vital to the well-being of people facing a life-limiting illness such as cancer.

c) Standardize palliative care education and training for healthcare providers, family caregivers and volunteers.

Many people facing a life-limiting illness can benefit from the support and comfort palliative care provides. However, our healthcare system does not have enough healthcare providers with the skills and knowledge required to provide people living with a life-limiting illness with high-quality, culturally safe palliative care when and where they need it.¹⁶

Manitoba has supported provincial education programming to advance competencies of palliative care among healthcare providers.¹⁷ However, there is no consistent and clear access to best practices and competencies are not standardized for all disciplines. Ensuring all healthcare providers have appropriate and consistent palliative care education and training will improve the quality and cultural safety of palliative care while improving access to palliative care for all Manitobans regardless of where they live and in what setting they choose to receive care.



Given the limitation of resources in our healthcare system and the increasing needs of our growing and aging population, community-based palliative care, in which volunteers and family caregivers play a substantive role, is being prioritized.¹⁸ Hospice and palliative care volunteers as well as family caregivers can be complementary to healthcare provider provision of palliative care across various settings and can positively influence the quality of care.^{19,20} More supports are needed to help family caregivers and volunteers complement community hospice and palliative care services. Improved family caregiver and volunteer standardized education and training as well as robust organizational coordination by an appropriate and qualified organization is needed to build systematic approaches that will improve the impact of palliative care volunteerism and the capacity of family caregivers.²¹

Recommendation 2: Implement cancer prevention policies that will prevent and reduce commercial tobacco use and youth vaping in Manitoba.

Commercial tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of disease and death in Manitoba with 1,525 Manitobans dying from commercial tobacco-related disease each year.²² For every premature death caused each year by smoking, at least 20 people who smoke live with a serious smoking-related illness.²³ This is 30,500 residents who are currently suffering adverse health outcomes from commercial tobacco use in Manitoba. 12% of people use commercial tobacco in Manitoba²⁴ and there are approximately 85,000 Manitoba youth who use tobacco.²⁵ Manitoba is also facing a new epidemic of youth vaping which continues to put youth who vape at risk of nicotine addiction. Youth who vape are two to three times more likely to start smoking.^{26,27,28} As a result, commercial tobacco use and youth vaping places an enormous burden on the quality of life, economy and healthcare system in Manitoba. These impacts and outcomes are 100% preventable.

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends the following best practice, evidence-informed approaches aimed at protecting and improving the health of all people living in Manitoba.

a) Raise the minimum age of purchase for commercial tobacco and vaping products to age 21.

Most people who use commercial tobacco start and become addicted to nicotine when they are teenagers.^{29,30} Youth vaping is a very serious public health issue and is considered an epidemic³¹ with 26% of Manitoba kids in grades 10-12 and 7% in grades 7-9 using vaping products³² and risking nicotine addiction and potential commercial tobacco use. Vaping is more common among younger people than older adults in Canada.³³

Youth generally obtain commercial tobacco and vaping products through retail and social sources.³⁴ Given that there are few 21-year-olds in high school, raising the minimum purchase age to 21 would help prevent most students from buying commercial tobacco and vaping products for their peers and will decrease the influence that friends with access to commercial tobacco and vaping products have on their underage friends.³⁵ Evidence indicates that an increase in the minimum purchase age to 21 would reduce smoking among youth ages 15–17 by 25%, and among youth 18-19 by 15%.³⁶



In Canada, PEI prohibits the sale of commercial tobacco and vaping products to youth under the age of 21. The minimum purchase age to buy commercial tobacco and vaping products in the United States is also age 21.

Recent polling in Manitoba showed strong public support for restricting the sale of vaping products among those under the age of 21 with 88% overall support by respondents.³⁷

More approaches are needed to respond to the youth vaping crisis and to prevent youth from smoking and increasing the minimum purchase age to 21 is an effective measure to do so.

b) Prohibit the sale of flavored vaping products, except for tobacco-flavoured products.

Youth vaping is considered an epidemic³⁸ and the main driver of the epidemic is flavoured vaping products.³⁹ Flavoured vaping products encourage youth to start and continue to use vaping products. Evidence shows the availability of flavours in vaping products increases initiation, use, frequency and intensity of use among young people.^{40,41,42,43,44,45} Almost all youth who try and continue to use vaping products do so because of flavours.^{46,47} Adolescents are more likely than adults to prefer non-traditional, sweet flavours such as fruit, candy and dessert flavours.^{48,49,50,51,52} The availability and promotion of flavoured vaping products is one of the most frequently cited reasons for vaping by youth and young adults^{53,54,55} and the vast majority of young people report initiating vaping with flavours other than tobacco flavour.^{56,57,58,59}

People who use vaping products have a greater risk of developing respiratory illness.⁶⁰ However, the main risk of vaping, particularly among youth, is nicotine addiction. Nicotine is an extremely addictive substance,⁶¹ making vaping products dangerously addictive. Nicotine negatively affects adolescent brain development, impacting mood, memory and impulse control.⁶² This is a profoundly serious public health issue as youth who use vaping products are two to three times more likely to start smoking.^{63,64,65}

A growing number of Canadian jurisdictions have banned flavoured vaping products in an effort to curb youth vaping including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, Quebec, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Given the compelling evidence showing the link between the appeal and availability of flavours and the initiation and continued use of vaping products among youth, a comprehensive flavour ban (except for tobacco flavour) is key to preventing and reducing youth vaping.

c) Implement a cost recovery fee on tobacco companies to fund Manitoba's commercial tobacco and youth vaping prevention and reduction efforts.

The costs associated with preventing and reducing commercial tobacco use in Manitoba are funded by taxpayers rather than the out-of-province corporations that are contributing to the burden of commercial tobacco use. The implementation of a cost recovery fee on commercial tobacco manufacturers could finance efforts to curb the negative health impacts and outcomes of smoking and youth vaping, support commercial tobacco and nicotine



cessation and fund prevention programming. Commercial tobacco companies should be required to pay annual fees to sell their products in Manitoba and the revenue should be used to fully fund commercial tobacco and youth vaping prevention and reduction efforts.

A commercial tobacco manufacturer cost recovery fee reflects the 'polluter pays' principle. Many Manitoba businesses are required to pay for the clean-up costs resulting from their harmful and negligent activities — whether the damage is deliberate or not. Examples of this includes natural resource companies who are required to pay for the mitigation of environmental damage and emissions resulting from mining, extraction and refining as well as transportation companies who are required to pay for the clean-up costs resulting from collisions, derailments and chemical spills.

This fee is similar to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration commercial tobacco manufacturers fee⁶⁶ which recovers US \$712 million annually and is applied to national commercial tobacco control efforts. This form of fee is also similar to the federal annual cannabis regulatory fee and provincial cannabis manufacturer fees in Quebec and New Brunswick. The federal minister of Mental Health and Addictions has been instructed to develop a cost-recovery mechanism that requires commercial tobacco companies to cover the cost of the federal commercial tobacco reduction strategy.⁶⁷

The commercial tobacco industry has caused the commercial tobacco epidemic and has played a role in the youth vaping crisis and should be held accountable for mitigation costs. An annual cost recovery fee would complement the province's lawsuit against commercial tobacco companies to recover healthcare costs, which reimburses for past treatment costs associated with commercial tobacco use, not current mitigation.

By implementing this fee, the Manitoba government would be demonstrating fiscal responsibility and would reinforce its commitment to curb commercial tobacco use and youth vaping by creating sustainable funding for prevention and reduction as well as nicotine cessation programming.

About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society works tirelessly to save and improve lives. We fund the brightest minds in cancer research. We provide a compassionate support system for all those affected by cancer, across Canada and for all types of cancer. As the voice for people who care about cancer, we work with governments to shape a healthier society. No other organization does all that we do to make lives better today and transform the future of cancer forever.

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