

Aggressive action needed to curb tobacco

What is Canada's leading preventable cause of disease and death?

It's tobacco.

This week is National Non-Smoking Week, providing a reminder that tobacco is still our number one public health issue. Smoking kills 45,000 Canadians every year and is responsible for about 30 per cent of all cancer deaths.

Based on the number of Canadians it kills, tobacco should be treated as an epidemic. It is well established that comprehensive, well-financed and sustained government strategies are highly effective at reducing smoking. With the current Federal Tobacco Control Strategy expiring in March 2018, we urge federal Minister of Health Ginette Petitpas Taylor to bring forward an aggressive new strategy with far better funding to achieve the goal of less than five per cent tobacco use by 2035.

Canada has made significant progress, but an enormous amount of work remains. The lives of a vast number of Canadians hang in the balance.

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