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Attention News Editors:

Pharmacists support removing tobacco products from pharmacies

EDMONTON, April 25 /CNW/ - The Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP) announced today that it strongly endorses the removal of tobacco products from premises where there is a pharmacy. The statement is made in support of efforts by the minister of Health and Wellness to reduce tobacco use and accessibility.

ACP President Jeff Whissell observed that pharmacists witness daily the harmful results of tobacco use and its related illnesses. "Pharmacists support individuals who want to quit smoking by offering smoking cessation programs, counselling and support."

Greg Eberhart, the college's registrar, said, "In 1999, 77 per cent of pharmacists responding to our survey indicated that sales of tobacco products should not be permitted in pharmacies." Since that time, many pharmacies have voluntarily removed tobacco products from their premises.

"Pharmacists are health professionals and pharmacies are health centres," said Eberhart. "It is a contradiction to offer health care services and to sell tobacco products."

ACP's stand is supported by the results of a college survey of Albertans completed in early 2007. Overall, 67 per cent of Albertans said "no" when asked if a store in which a pharmacy is located should sell tobacco products.

Seniors weighed even higher against selling tobacco products at 69.8 per cent for respondents who were 65 to 74 years old and 82.7 per cent for individuals aged 75 years and older.

"Of particular interest is that 72.8 per cent of respondents from rural Alberta said tobacco products should not be sold in premises in which a pharmacy is located," said Eberhart.

The college issued today's statement in support of the Campaign for a Smoke-free Alberta (CSFA), a coalition of Alberta health organizations. CSFA is currently contacting MLAs and encouraging them to support the minister of Health's efforts to introduce legislation banning tobacco products from premises where a pharmacy is located, among other tobacco-related issues. Most other provinces have tobacco-reduction legislation that restricts the sale of tobacco from premises that have pharmacies.

The Alberta College of Pharmacists is the regulatory and licensing body for the pharmacy profession in Alberta. For further information: Greg Eberhart, Registrar, (780) 990-0321; Lynn Otteson, Communications Leader, (780) 990-0321