

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medical association calls for provincial government support to curb youth smoking

Edmonton, May 16, 2007 – The Canadian Medical Association is urging the Alberta government to do more to stop smoking among youth. Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai, the Canadian Medical Association's immediate Past President says, "...we're seeing children as young as six years old who [have] started smoking [now]... the time has come for a vigorous healthy public policy approach to smoking among youth". Collins-Nakai appears on The Policy Channel in an exclusive interview (www.policychannel.com).

According to Collins-Nakai, Alberta has the worst legislative track record of any province in Canada and, she says, strong policy measures are needed to prevent youth smoking. She says the tobacco industry promotes tobacco use among children as a way to ensure adult-aged customers and she feels the two of the most obvious examples of the industry's efforts to target young people are price discounting (since youth are very vulnerable to pricing) and tobacco powerwalls in retail stores (which are often located close to chocolate bars and other products children often purchase). Collins-Nakai says discounting and powerwall promotions must be stopped if we are ever to curb youth smoking. And, she adds, now that every province except Alberta has placed restrictions on tobacco sales to minors, "Alberta has lots of catching up to do".

Collins-Nakai was speaking to The Policy Channel on behalf of the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta (www.smokefreealberta.com). The Campaign is supported by a coalition of Alberta based organizations. This coalition is encouraging Albertans to contact MLAs in support of smoke-free workplace legislation in Alberta.

To view the interview with Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai, go to www.policychannel.com. The Policy Channel is a web-based public policy forum and information site which provides conversation and interviews with the people who influence and implement public policy in Canada, 24 hours a day. The Policy Channel also aims to engage the community in a healthy debate surrounding the formulation of public policies and ideas that affect our daily lives.

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