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Media Release

Dental Hygienists Support Proposed Federal Ban on Menthol Cigarettes

May 3, 2016 (Ottawa, ON) — The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) applauds the federal government for its proposed ban on menthol cigarettes, blunt wraps, and most cigars. Announced on April 30 in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I, this amendment to the Tobacco Act is open to review and comments from interested parties for a 30-day consultation period.

“Flavoured tobacco products like menthol cigarettes mask the harsh tastes of tobacco and are particularly appealing to young people,” explains Donna Scott, CDHA president. “Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of premature death and disease in Canada, so preventing youth from initiating tobacco use is one of the most effective means of saving lives.”

In 2009 and 2015, when the federal Tobacco Act was amended to limit the marketing of tobacco products to youth, the use of flavouring additives was prohibited, yet menthol was excluded from this regulation. In the absence of a federal ban on menthol, various provinces adopted their own legislation, including Nova Scotia, Alberta, and New Brunswick.

“Since the harmful chemicals of tobacco products pass through the mouth, dental hygienists see first-hand the consequences of tobacco use,” Scott continues. “Dental hygienists screen and educate clients about visible changes in the mouth and recommend timely referrals for treatment.” When coupled with a good oral care plan that includes regular dental hygiene visits, the federal government’s proposed amendment to ban menthol products will help to promote a tobacco-free lifestyle and improve the oral and overall health of Canadians.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of close to 27,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing more than 17,500 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada, with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit www.dentalhygienecanada.ca

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