Tabled by the Minister of Health and Community Services K Handrigan November 18, 2026

Bill 35: Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act (Amendment)

Second Reading - Responses to Follow Up Questions

Department of Health and Community Services

November 18, 2026

1. Will the government be introducing or expanding supports for smoking cessation programs for those who will need support when flavoured vapes are no longer available?

- Newfoundland and Labrador already offers a range of evidence-based programs and services to help individuals reduce or quit tobacco and nicotine use, including vaping. These supports include:
    - the Smokers' Helpline, which provides telephone, text, and online cessation counselling;
    - the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP) Provincial Smoking Cessation Program, which provides coverage for approved cessation medications to eligible beneficiaries of the program;
    - online supports through KickAsh.ca, Bridge the gapp, and the Breaking Free Online program;
    - tobacco cessation services provided by NL Health Services, including screening, counselling, nicotine replacement therapy or NRT, cessation medications during hospital stays, and referrals to community-based supports; and
    - individuals can also speak with their primary care provider including physicians, nurse practitioners and pharmacists regarding prescriptions for nicotine dependence.
- Government remains committed to promoting access to evidence-based services and supports for individuals who wish to reduce or eliminate tobacco and nicotine use.

2. Any information or statistics on the use of smoking cessation programs in the province? Are we holding our own? Increasing success?

- Utilization of the NLPDP Provincial Smoking Cessation Program has increased steadily in recent years:
    - 2022-23: 1,586 clients;
    - 2023-24: 1,853 clients;
    - 2024-25: 2,072 clients; and
    - 2025-26: 2,175 clients.
- In June 2026, the Program was enhanced to:
    - increase coverage for nicotine replacement therapies from 12 to 24 weeks per calendar year without requiring special authorization; and
    - cover combination nicotine replacement therapies to better manage both short-term and long-term nicotine cravings.
- In 2024-25 the Smokers' Helpline had over 2,000 calls and 2,000 online registrations for cessation support. The service also has capacity to support additional individuals seeking smoking or vaping cessation assistance.

3. Is the government aware whether current smoking cessation programs are adequately meeting demand? Are some working better than others?

- Current smoking cessation supports are grounded in evidence-based best practices and are designed to provide a range of options to meet individual needs.
- Research consistently demonstrates that the gold standard for tobacco cessation is a combination of behavioural counselling, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or CBT, and pharmacotherapy, such as nicotine replacement therapy, varenicline, or bupropion. Combining counselling and medication significantly improves quit rates compared to either approach alone.
- The provincial Smokers' Helpline has supported individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador since 1999 through telephone-based coaching and guidance on the effective use of cessation medications and nicotine replacement therapies.

- The Breaking Free Online program, available at no cost through Bridge the gapp, is an evidence-based digital intervention that supports individuals in making lasting behavioural changes related to substance use and addictive behaviours.

4. Has there been any analysis on whether existing smoking cessation programs are effective in helping people quit vaping?

- Many of the same evidence-based approaches used for tobacco cessation are also used to support nicotine vaping cessation.
- Research indicates that the most effective approach remains a combination of behavioural counselling, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, or CBT, and pharmacotherapy, particularly nicotine replacement therapy where clinically appropriate.
- Existing provincial supports, including the Smokers' Helpline, NL Health Services tobacco cessation services, the NLPDP Provincial Smoking Cessation Program, and Breaking Free Online, can support individuals seeking to reduce or quit nicotine use, including vaping.

5. What guidance is being provided to healthcare professionals who are asked by patients about using vaping products to quit smoking?

- While the Department of Health and Community Services is currently aware that health professionals are providing information and guidance about smoking cessation to patients, as part of a strategic approach, the Department of Health and Community Services will ensure that health professionals have the necessary information they need so that they can provide appropriate smoking cessation strategies for their patients. This will include the provision of new information as required regarding the impacts of the legislative changes.
- To assist healthcare providers, a referral to the Smoker's Helpline is integrated within CorCare, allowing health care providers to easily initiate referrals during patient visits. This streamlines access to cessation support and helps facilitate conversations about quitting smoking as part of routine care.

- As well, the Smokers' Helpline and the Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco provide regular public communication/education, including with health care providers.