



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

BY THE HONOURABLE KIM N. WILSON, JP, MP

MINISTER OF HEALTH

**PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND
LEGISLATIVE REFORMS**

27th June 2025

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Today I rise to address a public health issue that affects our youth, our families, and the integrity of our regulatory system – the unchecked proliferation and marketing of nicotine-containing products.

Mr. Speaker, this matter directly relates to a commitment that the Government made in the 2025 Throne Speech and that I reiterated in this Honourable House on the 28th of March. On that occasion, I highlighted the role that smoking and vaping play in contributing to respiratory diseases, cancers and cardiovascular issues. In response, the Government pledged to advance new restrictions on flavoured vaping products as a concrete step towards reducing harm.

Mr. Speaker, the urgency of that commitment is underscored by the evolving landscape of nicotine use. Nicotine, while long associated with traditional tobacco use, is increasingly being repackaged and marketed in modern formats – including vapes, oral pouches, lozenges, and gum – often with flavours and packaging that are unmistakably appealing to

youth. These products, some of which were originally developed to support smoking cessation, are now being sold in convenience stores, gas stations, and duty-free outlets in a manner that trivializes their medical intent and bypasses appropriate health oversight.

Global evidence is clear. According to the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can harm adolescent brain development, impact memory and concentration, and increase the risk of future substance abuse. Flavoured nicotine products, in particular, have been found to increase initiation rates among youth. Bermuda is not immune to this trend, **Mr. Speaker**.

We are now witnessing the sale of fruit-flavoured vapes and nicotine pouches, lozenges and gum being sold outside of pharmacies, often without age verification. They are often packaged like candy and displayed next to chocolate bars at the checkout.

Let me be clear, **Mr. Speaker**: these are medicinal products that should only be sold in registered pharmacies, as outlined in the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1979.

Mr. Speaker, in response to this growing concern, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer and the Bermuda Health Council, will enforce the current restrictions requiring that nicotine products be sold only by registered pharmacists in registered pharmacies and, additionally, begin urgent legislative reforms to strengthen public protections.

These actions include:

1. Public Education and Retailer Engagement:

We will launch an awareness campaign and provide clear guidance to retailers to avoid unlawful sales and protect public health. We will reaffirm and enforce the requirement that nicotine products must be sold only by registered pharmacists in registered pharmacies, with appropriate labelling, dosing limits, and oversight as set forth in law.

2. Clarifying Legal Restrictions:

We will amend legislation to further define nicotine-containing products, ensuring that newer forms like pouches and lozenges fall explicitly under the same regulatory scrutiny as liquid-nicotine used in vapes.

3. Age Restrictions:

We will introduce clear statutory restrictions prohibiting the sale of all nicotine-containing products to individuals under the age of 18, aligned with protections already in place for tobacco under the Tobacco Control Act 2015.

4. Flavour Bans:

We will restrict or ban non-therapeutic flavours that are designed to appeal to youth, such as candy, dessert, and fruity variants, except for those explicitly approved for smoking cessation in clinical settings.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to closing the loopholes that have allowed these harmful products to be sold unchecked and without proper control. While we respect the role of legitimate smoking cessation aids, these must be distributed responsibly and only for their intended use, not disguised as lifestyle accessories for our young people.

I urge all parents, educators, retailers, and healthcare professionals to join us in this effort to safeguard Bermuda's young people. The future of our country depends on the health and well-being of the next generation.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**