

# Position Statement



## SMOKING, A PUBLIC HEALTH SCOURGE FOR DEDICATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

### Vision

*Given the extent and severity of tobacco use in our society, all members of the health network must incorporate the fight against smoking into their clinical practice and ensure that it is an integral part of Québec's health care services.*

#### JOINT STATEMENT

This statement was adopted by the Collège des médecins du Québec, the Ordre des dentistes du Québec, the Ordre des hygiénistes dentaires du Québec, the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec, the Ordre des optométristes du Québec, the Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec, the Ordre professionnel des inhalothérapeutes du Québec, and the Institut national de santé publique du Québec.

#### BACKGROUND

The effects of smoking on health are undeniable. For many years, tobacco use has been one of Québec's most serious health concerns. Tobacco use causes many illnesses in smokers and non smokers and produces a heavy burden on the health care system and considerable social costs. Tobacco use is the leading risk factor for the most deadly chronic illnesses, namely cardiovascular disease and cancer. More than 10,000 Quebecers die every year from tobacco use.

Subjected to the strong addiction induced by tobacco products, smokers often want to quit smoking, and most of them have tried quitting before. Health professionals are key members of our health care system and play a crucial role in successful smoking cessation. Smoking cessation counselling has been proven to be effective, and the unique relationship between health professionals and their patients/clients who use tobacco provides innumerable opportunities to improve the health of Quebecers and protect them from the harmful effects of smoking.

#### PLAN QUÉBÉCOIS DE LUTTE CONTRE LE TABAGISME

To address the issue of tobacco use, Québec has adopted a multi faceted strategy aimed at preventing the use of tobacco, promoting cessation, and protecting non-smokers from second hand smoke. The Plan québécois de lutte contre le tabagisme solicits the participation of numerous stakeholders from various disciplines, on the assumption that each stakeholder's strengths are complementary and help create synergy.



## COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF PROFESSIONAL ORDERS

To maximize the potential of health professionals in terms of smoking cessation in adults and young people, protection against second-hand smoke, and the prevention of tobacco use, professional orders commit to:

*Helping smokers to quit smoking is one of the most important services a health professional can offer.*

- encourage their members to make the fight against smoking a priority and promote the valuable role they can play;
- offer and promote training on tobacco use and on smoking cessation counselling;
- provide tools to encourage and help health professionals in their advisory/guidance role;
- promote community-based smoking cessation resources (iQuitnow services);
- raise public awareness about the effects of smoking and how health professionals can help;
- decide on the need to incorporate the subjects of tobacco use and counselling into health professionals' required academic curricula.

## INSTITUT NATIONAL DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE DU QUÉBEC

The Institut national de santé publique du Québec is committed to working with professional orders, universities and colleges to develop and maintain the clinical skills of health professionals to ensure they can effectively advise their patients and clients who smoke.

## HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN ACTION

### Recognizing the importance:

- of seizing **every opportunity to encourage** smokers to make the decision to quit smoking;
- of counselling smokers, even with a window of just **three to five minutes**;
- of considering patients and clients who smoke as **active partners** in the cessation process;
- of maintaining **up-to-date expertise** by taking part in training on smoking cessation counselling; and
- of using the **tools** available to health professionals.

### During clinical interventions:

**Ask** all patients/clients if they smoke and **document** their smoking status.

**Advise** patients/clients to quit smoking emphasizing that, for example, "quitting smoking is the most important preventive behaviours they can undertake to improve their health."

**Support** smokers based on their level of motivation:

- Discuss the health effects of tobacco and second-hand smoke.
- Reinforce motivation by discussing the benefits of quitting.
- Discuss strategies for quitting smoking altogether, or for not smoking indoors or in the car.
- Recommend pharmacological treatments.
- Provide reading materials.
- Direct the smoker to smoking cessation resources such as help lines, websites and smoking cessation centres.

**Personalize** interventions using a non-confrontational motivational approach.

**Recognize** that relapses are common and offer follow-up.