

**Report to  
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health  
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa  
4 March 2019 / 4 mars 2019**

**Submitted on February 21, 2019  
Soumis le 21 février 2019**

**Submitted by  
Soumis par:**

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**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE      File Number: ACS2019-OPH-HPP-0004**

**SUBJECT: OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH SUBMISSION TO HEALTH CANADA ON  
PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR CANNABIS EDIBLES, EXTRACTS  
AND TOPICALS**

**OBJET: SOUMISSION DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE OTTAWA AU PROJET DE  
RÈGLEMENT PROPOSÉ PAR SANTÉ CANADA SUR LE CANNABIS  
COMESTIBLE, LES EXTRAITS ET LE CANNABIS POUR USAGE  
TOPIQUE**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive the Medical Officer of Health's submission to Health Canada in response to proposed regulation of edible cannabis, extracts and topicals, as outlined in Document 1, and approve the recommendations contained therein.**

## **RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la Ville d'Ottawa prenne connaissance des observations qui ont été présentées à Santé Canada, par la médecin en chef, en réponse au projet de règlement sur le cannabis comestible, l'extrait de cannabis et le cannabis pour usage topique, comme l'indique le document 1, et approuve les recommandations qui y figurent.**

## **BACKGROUND**

The *Cannabis Act* authorized the production and sale of cannabis for non-medical purposes on October 17, 2018. The classes of cannabis authorized under the Act are currently limited to fresh or dried cannabis, cannabis oil or cannabis plants or seeds. The *Cannabis Act* will authorize the legal sale and production of cannabis edibles and concentrates no later than October 17, 2019. Regulations for these new classes of cannabis are needed to address the public health and safety risks of these products.

On December 20, 2018, Health Canada launched a consultation seeking feedback on the strict regulation of edible cannabis, extracts and topicals. Health Canada published proposed regulations for these new classes of cannabis in the [Canada Gazette](#) and provided a summary in the [Backgrounder: Consultation on the strict regulation of additional cannabis products](#). The deadline to submit feedback was February 20, 2019.

### Summary of the proposed regulations

- There will be three new classes of cannabis for legal production and sale: edible, extracts and topical.
- New Good Production Practices that are adapted from the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* to reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses. Rules include hiring a trained quality assurance person, cleanliness requirements, controls to prevent contamination, proper ventilation to control odours and contamination, chemical and microbial contamination testing, proper record keeping, etc.
- The production of edibles and non-cannabis food will be prohibited in the same facility, unless edible cannabis is produced in a separate building.
- Restrictions on the products include: the use of ingredients that could increase the appeal to young persons, increase risk of food-borne illness, encourage overconsumption or increase the effects, addictiveness or toxicity of the cannabis product.

- Restrictions to the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) that can be contained within a single serving of the cannabis product and a cap on the amount contained in the overall package (e.g. Maximum of 10mg of THC in a single edible and package; 10mg of THC per single unit of a cannabis extract, such as a capsule, and 1,000mg of THC per package; 1,000mg of THC limit per package of a topical product).
- There will be restrictions to the overall package size of extracts (e.g. 7.5 grams for products containing more than 3% THC by weight and all extracts that contain ethyl alcohol and are intended to be ingested and 90ml for all liquid extracts).
- The container for extracts must be designed such that the product is not easily poured or drunk directly from the container, and if not meant for inhalation, must have an integrated dispensing mechanism such as a metered spray that dispenses no more than 10mg of THC.
- Maintains existing packaging requirements under the current regulations, such as child-resistant and plain packaging, THC and CBD content, health warnings and a universal THC symbol.
- Edible products must be labeled with a cannabis-specific nutrition facts table
- Claims respecting health benefits or nutrition on the label will be prohibited, for example stating “high source of fibre”, “low fat”, “reduces the appearance of wrinkles”, etc.
- Restrictions on the use of sweeteners, colourants or ingredients that could encourage use such as nicotine in cannabis extracts.
- Prohibits the display of certain flavours on the label of extracts that could appeal to youth such as dessert or confectionery flavours.
- Prohibits the association of a cannabis product, its packaging or labelling, including the brand element, with an alcoholic beverage, or a company name or logo that manufactures alcoholic beverages.

## **DISCUSSION**

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has been monitoring the development of cannabis legislation and assessing the potential public health impacts. OPH has advocated for the adoption of a public health approach to the legalization of cannabis, including:

- Investments for health promotion/prevention activities;

- Sufficient health protection;
- Sufficient supports for evidence-informed early identification and treatment; and
- Investments in health assessment, surveillance and research.

The strict regulation of cannabis, using a public health approach, can mitigate the costs associated with the negative impacts of cannabis use. Overall, OPH was supportive of the proposed regulations. The Medical Officer of Health submitted a response to Health Canada that recommended additional actions that could protect the public, particularly youth, from potential harms of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals.

See Document 1 for OPH's full submission to Health Canada that includes the supporting evidence and rationale for each recommendation. OPH's recommendations included:

**1) Implementing further restrictions to reduce the appeal among young people, accidental ingestion by children and risks of overconsumption, including:**

- Prohibiting any product that resembles or mimics familiar food items, or is associated with a brand of food or candy and could be appealing to children, such as gummy bears, lollipops, chocolate bar or cookie brands, etc.
- Requiring all edible products be stamped, marked or imprinted with the standardized THC symbol on at least one side of the edible product, unless products are impracticable to stamp, mark or imprint, for example liquids.
- Prohibiting the use of flavouring agents in cannabis extracts.

**2) Requiring labels for all cannabis-infused products intended for ingestion to include a health statement about the delayed onset of impairing effects and information on accidental ingestion or overconsumption.**

- Requiring a health statement about the delayed onset of impairing effects on cannabis-infused products intended for ingestion.
- Requiring that information regarding low-risk cannabis use guidelines be provided on the product labels for all cannabis products (i.e. include a web link to low-risk cannabis use guidelines).

- Requiring information on what to do in case of accidental ingestion or overconsumption, similar to requirements for non-prescription drugs, on the label for all cannabis-infused products.
- Creating a centralized point of contact for poison control centres, such as a nation-wide, toll-free Poison Help Line that connects to the nearest regional poison control centre and subsequently, requiring this information be included on the label of all cannabis-infused products.

**3) Consider imposing a table format for the product information and health warnings for all cannabis-infused products, similar to the Drug Facts Table.**

**4) Prohibit the representation of a tobacco product, (i.e. cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigar) or a tobacco company name or logo who manufactures tobacco products on all cannabis products.**

**5) Continue investments in research, population health surveillance, and public education campaigns in advance of the legalization of edibles, extracts and topicals.**

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

To inform the development of the Medical Officer of Health's submission to Health, Canada in response to proposed regulation of edible cannabis, extracts and topicals, OPH staff consulted with the Ontario Public Health Collaborative on Cannabis.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to the Board of Health approving this report's recommendation.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 - Medical Officer of Health's submission to Health Canada in response to proposed regulation of edible cannabis, extracts and topicals

**DISPOSITION**

OPH will continue to monitor results of the Health Canada's consultation and subsequent release of the final regulations for the new classes of cannabis.

OPH will also continue its work under the 4-point cannabis plan to reduce the harms of cannabis use that was approved by the Board at its meeting on February 5, 2018. This includes developing public education about the effects of edible and high THC potency products in anticipation of these products being legally available by the end of the year.