

Wednesday September 30, 2009

Honourable Chris Bentley
Attorney General of Ontario
McMurtry-Scott Bldg
11th Floor, 720 Bay St
Toronto ON M5G2K1

Dear Minister,

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) applauds the Ontario government's announcement that it will sue tobacco companies to recover the costs of tobacco-related health care. Your government is to be congratulated on this landmark announcement that will require the tobacco industry to account for long-term practices that are inconsistent with acceptable corporate behaviour, the health and welfare of Ontarians, and a strong Ontario economy.

The Tobacco *Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act* will allow Ontario to recover much of what it has lost to the tobacco epidemic to date. While the loss of health, life, and the company of loved ones has no remedy, the Act has the potential to reduce future suffering related to tobacco. But daunting challenges remain: the trend to quitting has reached a plateau, inexpensive contraband tobacco provides a dangerous temptation to price-sensitive young consumers, and many of those with mental health problems and with other substance use problems continue to smoke. Only through well-coordinated, continued attention to this epidemic will we comprehensively address Ontario's most deadly and expensive addiction.

CAMH has seen, first hand, the impact of tobacco on the lives of its clients who are some of the most vulnerable to the allure of tobacco marketing. Our clinical programs will continue helping smokers quit. Our policy, research, and education programs will continue to shine a light on the broader issues and advocate for effective solutions. We look forward to a continued partnership with the government in putting health first in Ontario.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Garfinkel, MD, FRCP(C)
President & Chief Executive Officer