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Doctors say: Too many Canadian children lack protection from pesticides used on lawns and gardens

TORONTO (August 30, 2016) – The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) released a new report that documents the dismal state of affairs when it comes to protecting Canadian children from cosmetic pesticides used on lawns and gardens.

The report, which compares provincial and municipal laws used to limit the cosmetic use of pesticides on lawns and gardens across Canada, found that comprehensive laws exist in only a few provinces. “While seven provinces have laws that ban the non-essential use of cosmetic pesticides, only two provinces – Ontario and Nova Scotia – provide strong protection from chemicals often referred to as cosmetic pesticides” observed **Kim Perrotta**, CAPE’s Executive Director.

“There is a strong body of evidence linking pesticides to cancer, developmental deficits in our children, and adverse reproductive outcomes” said **Dr. John Howard**, Chair of CAPE’s Board. “As health professionals, we say the health of our children is more important than a perfect lawn or garden.”

“Only **Ontario and Nova Scotia** (which scored A- and B respectively) ban the use of all pesticides, except those that have been proven to be safe, for gardens, shrubs, and trees as well as lawns” noted CAPE Board Member, **Alison Scott Butler** QC. “These two provinces use a **white list** approach where pesticides can only be used when manufacturers have proven that they are safe for use.”

“The white list approach has been adopted by **Manitoba** (which scored a B-) but it has only been applied to herbicides used on lawns” said **Dr. Warren Bell**, a founding member of the CAPE Board. “It is of significant concern that Manitoba’s newly elected government is actively considering rolling back these rules.”

“**Quebec**’s current regulations (which scored a C) are not as protective as those in Nova Scotia and Ontario because they only apply to about 20 active ingredients and lawns. However, a proposed new pesticides strategy could vault Quebec into a leadership role if it is implemented” stated CAPE President, **Dr. Jean Zigby**. “CAPE remains impressed that Quebec prohibits the use of pesticides in indoor environments frequented by children.”

“While **Newfoundland and Labrador** have regulations banning pesticides, they are very weak (scored D-)” said CAPE member, **Dr. Ian Simpson**. “Since they only apply to five active ingredients when they are applied to lawns, they do not provide very comprehensive protection.”

“**Alberta** has a lot of work to do (scored an E) but we are hopeful that the new government - which understands that well designed regulations can have economic, as well health and environmental benefits - will start to turn things around for the benefit of all Albertans’ health” said CAPE member, **Dr. Raquel Feroe**.

Ms. Perrotta concluded, “Canadians know that cosmetic pesticides are unnecessary and feel that health risks far outweigh the value of a pristine yard. We need Canadian regulators to keep pace with citizen concerns. CAPE trusts, our report, ***Cosmetic Pesticides – Provincial Policies & Municipal Bylaws: Lessons Learned & Best Practices*** at: (cape.ca/pesticide-policy-report) is a positive contribution to this important children’s health issue.”

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Established over 20 years ago, CAPE is the only Canadian organization dedicated to speaking for health professionals on environmental issues. Over the last 11 years, CAPE has led or participated in campaigns to ban the cosmetic use pesticides in six provinces and several municipalities.

CAPE SCORECARD – Provincial Bans on Cosmetic Pesticides – 2016

Jurisdiction	Date passed	Pesticides Captured			Scope of Coverage			Exceptions		SCORE	Rating
		White List ✓✓	# of Toxic pesticides ✓✓✓✓	Covers New ✓✓	Covers More than Lawns ✓✓	Indoor Spaces ✓✓	Sensitive Areas (e.g. schools) ✓	Golf Courses ✗	Prohibits Municipal bylaws ✗		
Ontario	2008	✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✗	✗	9	A-
Nova Scotia	2011	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✗	✗ ⁽⁴⁾	7	B
Manitoba ⁽³⁾	2014	✓	✓✓✓✓ ⁽²⁾	✓✓			✓	✗		6	B-
Quebec	2003	✓ ⁽¹⁾	✓✓			✓ ⁽¹⁾	✓	✗		4	C
PEI	2010		✓					✗		0	D-
New Brunswick	2009		✓					✗		0	D-
Newfoundland & Labrador	2011		✓					✗		0	D-
Saskatchewan											E
Alberta											E
British Columbia											E

Notes:

1. Only for areas frequented by children.
2. Only herbicides are captured.
3. Manitoba is considering withdrawing its Regulations.
4. Nova Scotia still has one municipality (Halifax) with an active bylaw.
5. This assessment is based generally on the construction of provincial cosmetic pesticide bans. It does not reflect the actual “on the ground” efficacy of a cosmetic pesticide law (e.g. enforcement initiatives).
6. Enforcement and education are important aspects of effective cosmetic pesticide bans. For more information, please refer to the CAPE report: ***Cosmetic Pesticides – Provincial Policies & Municipal Bylaws: Lessons Learned & Best Practices*** at: cape.ca/pesticide-policy-report

Score:

A – Excellent Protection (9, 10, 11)
 B – Good Protection (6, 7, 8)
 C – Some Protection (3, 4, 5)
 D – Little Protection (0, 1, 2)
 E – No Protection

Rating:

Maximum ✓ or ✗ score is denoted at the top of each column.
 ✓ - positive (added)
 ✗ - negative (subtracted)