

Canadian Thoracic Society position on the SEAC draft opinion on restricting per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)

May 2026

The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) support strong and comprehensive measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), in alignment with the position of the European Respiratory Society. A broad and ambitious approach to PFAS restriction is necessary to protect both human and environmental health.

CTS recognizes that climate change represents a significant and growing threat to respiratory health, disproportionately affecting individuals living with asthma, COPD and other lung diseases. At the same time, elements of respiratory care – particularly inhaled therapies – contribute to healthcare-related greenhouse gas emissions. Metered-dose inhalers (MDIs), which rely on propellants with high global warming potential, account for a substantial proportion of inhaler-related emissions.¹

In its [2023 position statement](#), CTS emphasized the importance of reducing the environmental impact of inhalers through a multi-faceted approach involving clinicians, patients, health systems and industry, while ensuring that treatment decisions remain patient-centred. Shared decision-making, considering clinical effectiveness, patient ability and preference, cost and environmental impact is essential in optimizing respiratory care.²

CTS supports a balanced and pragmatic approach to PFAS restriction that:

- Advances an ambitious, phased reduction of PFAS, supported by appropriate transition timelines
- Ensures uninterrupted access to essential inhaled medications, including pressurized metered-dose inhalers for patients who depend on them
- Accelerates the development and adoption of lower-emission alternatives, including next-generation propellants and inhalers technologies
- Promotes patient-centered, evidence-based care, recognizing that no single inhaler type is appropriate for all patients
- Encourages system-wide collaboration across regulators, clinicians, researchers and industry to reduce environmental impact without compromising patient outcomes.

Dr. Erika Penz, past President of the CTS and co-author of the [CTS Position Statement on Climate Change and Choice of Inhalers for Patients with Respiratory Disease](#) notes, “As respiratory specialists, we have a responsibility to address the health impacts of climate change while ensuring that patients can continue to receive safe and effective treatments that they need. Achieving this balance requires thoughtful, patient-centered decision making and collaborative action across the healthcare system, including

¹ Gupta S, Couillard S, Digby G, Tse SM, Green S, Acheron R, et al. Canadian Thoracic Society position statement on climate change and choice of inhalers for patients with respiratory disease. *Can J Respir Crit Care Sleep Med*. 2023;7(5):232–239. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24745332.2023.2254283>

² Gupta S, Couillard S, Digby G, Tse SM, Green S, Acheron R, et al. Canadian Thoracic Society position statement on climate change and choice of inhalers for patients with respiratory disease. *Can J Respir Crit Care Sleep Med*. 2023;7(5):232–239. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24745332.2023.2254283>

implementation of regulations that will impact access to essential medicines for patients”.

CTS underscores that while lower carbon inhaler options such as dry powder and soft mist inhalers can reduce the environmental impact of inhaled medicines, they are not suitable for all patients or clinical situations. Ensuring access to a full range of therapeutic options remains critical to safe and equitable care.

Protecting respiratory health requires a dual commitment: addressing the environmental determinants of lung disease while preserving access to life-saving treatments. CTS remains committed to advancing solutions that meet both objectives and supports global efforts to responsibly transition away from harmful substances such as PFAS.

About the Canadian Thoracic Society

The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) is Canada’s national specialty society for respirology that brings together specialists, researchers, educators and healthcare professionals working in respiratory, critical care, and sleep medicine. The CTS advocates lung health by enhancing the ability of healthcare professionals through leadership, collaboration, research, learning and advocacy, and providing the best respiratory practices in Canada.

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