

# Pesticides not worth the risk: physicians

## Chemicals can cause cancer, birth defects

BY JUDITH LAVOIE, VICTORIA TIMES COLONIST MARCH 4, 2013



Doctors and nurses want British Columbians to think about whether a green lawn and bug-free plants are worth the risk of cancer, birth defects or neurological disorders such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's diseases.

A campaign starting next week, led by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, is asking the B.C. government to reconsider its decision not to ban cosmetic pesticides.

Advertisements, signed by more than 100 doctors and nurses and supported by the David Suzuki Foundation and Environmental Defence, urge the government "to enact a provincewide ban on the use and sale of non-essential pesticides."

Although the provincial government is making changes to the Integrated Pest Management Act, they fall far short of the outright ban pledged by Premier Christy Clark during her Liberal leadership campaign.

Instead, the legislation, which has been tabled but not passed, will require a licensed sprayer to apply most pesticides in landscaped areas.

Regulations will be developed in consultation with the landscaping industry and retailers, said an Environment Ministry spokesman. Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, said it is baffling that B.C. is not following the example of six other provinces and banning lawn pesticides.

"There's no reason to take this risk when the only thing you're doing is changing the appearance of a property," Forman said from Toronto.

"I think this provincial government is not as attuned to environmental and health issues as we would like them to be."

Research on the health risks is strong, Forman said. "There's a broadening and deepening of the science on pesticides that is painting a more and more ominous picture."

The new rules will entrench the ability of landscapers and lawn care companies to keep spraying as long as they want, he said.

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