



News Release

For Immediate Release

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The Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Is Not Doing Enough to Prevent Minors from Getting Cannabis: Auditor General

(Toronto) The Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation (OCRC) does not have sufficient age verification controls in place to prevent minors from buying cannabis from its online store or from receiving cannabis product deliveries, says Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk in her 2021 Annual Report. It has also been progressing slowly on a key mandate to promote social responsibility, and it does little to educate the public about the difference between regulated cannabis products and those sold on the illegal market.

“OCRC is a young Crown agency that is taking steps to address operational gaps, and it has made a number of significant, positive changes,” said Lysyk. “However, selling cannabis comes with the need for extra effort to try to provide public education to assist people as they weigh the costs and benefits – both financial and personal – of consuming this newly legalized product and the risk of purchasing cannabis in the illegal market.”

The audit found several weaknesses in how OCRC deals with its customers. For example, inaccurate inventory forecasting has led to complaints that products are often out of stock. In addition, OCRC’s recent change from outsourced to in-house customer care staffing has cut dedicated customer-care staff by half, resulting in longer wait times for inquiries, claims, and complaints. OCRC also does not have effective mechanisms to oversee the use, retention and safeguarding of customer information collected by third party providers.

OCRC also has not been transparent with the producers of cannabis products. It is not clear how products are chosen for sale, or how prices are set.

“Better management processes will further improve OCRC’s business operations,” said Lysyk. “Careful attention is needed to OCRC’s contract management with their third party providers, performance management, reporting processes, as well as public information and education.”

The audit report contains 16 recommendations for improvement.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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