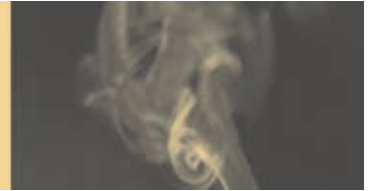


4 What

Manitobans Said



The Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health's recommendation of a smoking ban in all workplaces is consistent with what Manitobans said regarding how best to deal with ETS. Of the presentations and submissions that were made to the Task Force, the majority (approximately 70 per cent), were supportive of a province-wide smoking ban in public and workplaces. However, few of these presenters and submissions made the distinction between indoor and outdoor places, as the Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health did.

In addition, several Manitobans (about 5 per cent) took the time to share their personal experiences about how tobacco has affected their lives or the lives of their friends and family. Although many of these presenters did not specifically advocate or oppose a province-wide ban, their negative feelings about the harmful effects of ETS were clearly expressed. Another 5 per cent of presenters made recommendations about specific issues related to ETS rather than taking a position on a province-wide ban.

The minority (about 20 per cent) of presenters were opposed to a province-wide smoking ban. Even among the people who were not advocates of a ban, a common theme that permeated many of their comments was a recognition that a ban was likely inevitable at some point in the future.

The arguments that were put forward regarding whether or not the provincial government should proceed with a province-wide smoking ban can be grouped by nine themes as presented next.

1. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH REGULATIONS

Several presenters noted that full compliance with the *Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act* would require eliminating tobacco smoke from Manitoba workplaces (PSFC, January, 2001a). The regulations under the Act list 25 chemicals that are found in cigarette smoke. Manitoba law

requires that the occupational exposure limit for these chemicals shall be “as close to zero as reasonably practicable.” At least two chemicals found in cigarette smoke are known human carcinogens for which there is no safe level of exposure. The Workplace Health Hazard Regulation RM 53/58 says that no worker should be exposed to such substances. According to current Manitoba Labour law, the chemicals listed are dangerous, potent carcinogens that must not be present in any workplace, but they are allowed if they come from the end of a cigarette. Many presenters echoed the sentiment of the Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, when they suggested that banning tobacco smoke altogether is the easiest and most practical way to eliminate the hazard it presents from the work environment.

“Banning smoking is an established ‘reasonably practicable’ measure to reduce exposure to cigarette smoke chemicals to zero.”

2. PHASED-IN APPROACH

Some people and organizations (including the Advisory Committee on Workplace Safety and Health) suggested that there should be a phased-in approach. Some presenters made this recommendation because they felt that the public and employees needed time to adjust to the idea, and to prepare for the ban (for example, some employees or members of the public might want to pursue cessation efforts). Some presenters also felt that time was needed for businesses to engage in education and awareness raising with patrons and employees. Some presenters felt that time was needed so that the details around enforcement could be worked out, particularly in rural areas.

The majority of people commenting on implementation dates, however, indicated that the issue has been debated long enough and that a phased-in approach is unnecessary. Some people suggested further that, given the situation in Brandon and Winnipeg, a province-wide

ban is anticipated. Another sentiment expressed by several members and representatives of the business community was that too long of a transition would work to the disadvantage of Brandon and Winnipeg, which already have outright bans.

“The great majority of Manitobans are ready for this and are, in fact, expecting it. On this issue, they’re ahead of government.”

3. RIGHTS

Many presenters put forward arguments having to do with rights, i.e. the rights of smokers, the rights of non-smokers, and the rights of business owners.

One of the most common arguments put forward by those opposed to a province-wide smoking ban is the fact that tobacco is a legal substance, and there should be a public place where people can go to use it. Several presenters argued that a province-wide ban would be “undemocratic,” and “an infringement on the individual rights and freedoms of smokers.” The second point most commonly made by people who hold this view is that individuals should have the freedom of choice to decide which establishments they wish to patronize, and that this process would be facilitated if establishments posted clearly visible signs indicating whether or not smoking is allowed.

“In our democratic society, a non-smoker has the freedom to choose to enter a beverage room where there’s cigarette smoke, they don’t have to go in. Surely the smoker has the freedom to buy and enjoy a legal product in at least one public place.”

Several presenters expressed their frustration over the fact that a province-wide smoking ban is being debated, yet tobacco is a legal product (this is closely tied to the smokers’ rights debate). Many of these same people suggested that if tobacco is really as harmful as everybody says it is, then the government should ban the sale of cigarettes altogether. A few people went on to note the apparent contradiction of a situation where government might ban the use of tobacco in certain settings, while continuing to benefit from cigarette tax revenue.

In addition to being an infringement on smokers’ rights, the majority of people opposed to a ban also felt that smoking bans are an unreasonable intrusion into private enterprise. It was argued that it is the right of business owners to decide whether or not they want their establishments to be smoke-free.

“Restaurants, bars and the like are not truly public spaces. They are private property where the owner invites the public. If management has the right to refuse service to anyone for various reasons then it should be up to the individual owners what is allowed in their place of business (provided it is not a criminal offence).”

It was further suggested that the service industry will adapt to the desires of the clientele...that is, the business owner will strive to meet the expressed needs of his/her customers, whether they want smoke-free or not. It was proposed that as the number of non-smokers keeps growing, non-smoking bars will appear, because such ventures will be profitable.

Hand-in-glove with the argument about leaving the issue to market forces was the contention put forward by a handful of presenters that smoke-free public places should be the result of social trends, not regulation. These people suggested that smoking rates are declining over time, and, if left alone, smoking will eventually become a non-issue, and the hospitality industry will adapt accordingly.

Many people challenged the position that smoking will eventually become a non-issue. These presenters noted that while there may have been slight decreases in smoking rates in Canada over the past several years, these decreases have not been fast enough or significant enough, given the seriousness of the existing health threat. Some of these same people suggested that the reason smoking rates have declined is due to the tobacco control measures undertaken by various levels of government over the past decade, aimed at prevention, education, protection and denormalization. Many of these presenters suggested that, as smoking rates decline further, even greater effort will be required in order to continue achieving progress.

The most common argument put forward by supporters of a province-wide smoking ban was the position that people only have a right to smoke in so far as it does not affect somebody else's right to not inhale their second hand smoke. Several people described the negative health effects they experience when they are exposed to second-hand smoke (e.g., coughing, pneumonia, and asthma attacks), and noted that the presence of smoke in public places has added to their health problems, and severely limited their social lives.

“Smoking is still legal in Canada, and I have no problem with people who want to smoke. I only want the right to choose whether or not I do.”

4. LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

A wide variety of presenters from a broad range of perspectives (including health professionals, municipal leaders and local business people to name only a few) indicated that, given the existence of smoking by-laws in Winnipeg and Brandon, a level playing field would be much preferred to the patchwork of municipal by-laws that currently exist. This sentiment was expressed by both proponents and opponents of a province-wide ban. All three major Chambers of Commerce (Brandon, Winnipeg and Manitoba) passed no judgment on the morality of smoking or the desirability of a province-wide smoking ban, but recommended consistency across the province with respect to policies on ETS so that, as the Brandon Chamber of Commerce put it, “the competitive arena is level.”

Many people observed that the 30 per cent of Manitobans not currently living under a smoking ban have the same right to clean air as do the other 70 per cent who are protected by Winnipeg and Brandon's smoking by-laws. Several presenters noted that all of the reasons Winnipeg's ban was put in place also apply to the rest of the province.

“It should not matter if I am in Winnipeg, Brandon, or any other community in Manitoba, my family deserves to be protected from the hazards of second-hand smoke.”

5. LEADERSHIP

Many presenters pressed upon the Task Force that the provincial government has both a moral and legal responsibility to protect all Manitobans from the harmful and very dangerous effects of second-hand smoke. Some presenters argued that if Manitoba becomes the first province to go smoke-free, other jurisdictions will follow. Many presenters also commented on the responsibility adults have to protect children from the hazards of ETS.

“Children are not in the position to be able to control their environment, so it is up to the adults in charge to make important decisions for them.”

In showing such leadership, several presenters argued that the government would be moving with the current tide of social change.

The responsibility to regulate smoking has been primarily held by municipal governments. Both Winnipeg and Brandon have passed by-laws that ban smoking in most workplaces. However the recent ruling by the Workers’ Compensation Board in Ontario points to a need for provincial governments to also play a role in setting workplace smoking policy. Many presenters referred to the situation of Heather Crowe, who is a 57-year old woman who spent her entire 40-year career working in the hospitality sector, mostly as a waitress. She is now dying from lung cancer as a result of her exposure to second-hand smoke. In an unprecedented decision in late 2002, the Ontario Workers’ Compensation Board accepted her claim that ETS caused her lung cancer, and awarded her compensation. Some presenters cautioned against future legal action in Manitoba similar to that of Heather’s, if legislation protecting workers from the effects of tobacco smoke is not implemented.

Although a few people suggested that municipalities should continue to be able to make their own decisions about ETS, the great majority of private citizens and municipal officials the Task Force heard from urged the provincial government to take action. These same people noted that municipalities find it difficult to do it on their own because this is a controversial issue that pits municipalities, councilors, and community members against each other, many of whom have important personal relationships.

“The smoking issue has proven to be very divisive in at least two instances in our small community. In order to protect our citizens, a policy, which prohibits smoking in public places, must be enforced on a province-wide basis.”

Many presenters suggested that social change is always difficult, and several pointed to the initial controversy of seatbelt laws which have since been proven to have saved many lives. Several people noted that negativity towards the idea of smoking bans is borne largely out of fear, but suggested that people will adapt quickly.

6. ECONOMIC IMPACT

Several presenters pointed to the correlation between bar and VLT patrons and smoking, and predicted a decline in tourism, Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) revenue and overall patronage of bars, restaurants and bowling alleys in the event of a province-wide smoking ban.

The Manitoba Hotel Association (MHA) explained that at the beginning of the 1990s rural Manitoba hotels were the first siteholders in Canada for VLTs, because the Provincial Government recognized that rural hotels needed a new source of revenue to exist. The MHA noted further that

the VLT program has been successful on many fronts. Firstly, it saved many rural hotels, secondly it provided much needed capital to repair and renovate, and thirdly it has been the backbone of hotel development throughout the province.

The MHA presented statistics to the Task Force that said that over the first three months of the smoking ban in Brandon (starting in September, 2002), VLT traffic dropped 18 per cent, and that over the following three months, VLT traffic was down even more (i.e. 30 per cent). More than one presenter estimated the actual loss in VLT revenue in Brandon to equal approximately \$3 million a year. Some of these same presenters went on to say that since Brandon represents 5 per cent of the population of Manitoba, they would predict a loss in VLT revenue across the entire province totaling approximately \$60 million a year if a province-wide smoking ban was implemented.

In a January, 2003 presentation to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the MHA indicated that the negative financial impact of Brandon's smoking ban was being felt throughout the hospitality sector and beyond. The MHA pointed to the example of a local egg supplier who had advised Brandon City Council that their deliveries to Brandon were off significantly, as an indicator of how far reaching the impact of the ban was. The MHA described how a group of businesses including restaurants, hotel, bars, billiard rooms, Veterans Associations and bowling alleys had supplied councilors and the Mayor with their "disastrous financial results" for the first three months of the ban, reporting reductions of 30-70 per cent of gross revenue. The MHA also pointed to a Probe Research survey of 400 Brandon adults reported in December, 2002, that seemed to support this position. The survey indicated that in the first three months of the smoking ban being in effect, smokers had

cut back visits to the City's licensed restaurants and bars by 55 per cent, but that non-smokers had not made any significant increase in their number of visits. Some presenters noted that Manitoba Liquor Control Commission statistics in the Brandon market also show that purchases by bars were down 20 per cent in September 2002.

Other presenters noted that the Provincial Government is also affected by the decline in bar and VLT traffic in Brandon, because it is receiving significantly less revenue from VLT play, liquor taxes and PST remittances by the affected businesses. Several presenters questioned how the Provincial Government was going to make up for the anticipated loss of tens of millions of dollars in revenue if a province-wide smoking ban is implemented.

People in rural Manitoba described the uniqueness of their situation as compared to Winnipeg or Brandon, noting that it will be easier for larger chain establishments to absorb large losses in revenue than it will be for smaller independent operations. Some presenters noted further that a ban would be particularly harmful to establishments in very small communities where there is only "one game in town." Some presenters explained that people will choose to buy a case of beer and go to their friends' garage to smoke, or stay home, rather than go out to a public bar or restaurant. Several presenters argued that although restaurants may find it easier to reinvent themselves, such a ban would hit bars and bowling alleys particularly hard, especially in rural Manitoba, because the percentage of bar patrons who smoke is much higher than the general population. Presenters in northern Manitoba noted their disproportionately high rates of smoking, and business owners (especially managers/owners of bars and bowling alleys) in the North expressed great concern about potential economic losses as a result of a province-wide ban.

“The decision to go non-smoking has been in the mix for many years, in fact many hotels have gone non-smoking in many areas of their operations. However at this time the overriding feeling is that this is not the time for their bar areas to go non-smoking. Some have tried and have gone back to permitting smoking.”

In response to the position that a smoking-ban would have negative economic consequences, many presenters pointed to the following research which shows that in jurisdictions where smoking bans have been implemented, bars and restaurants experienced an initial decline in revenue but eventually increased to or in many cases surpassed pre-ban revenues:

- In a recent article by Scollo, Lal, Hyland and Glantz (2003), the entire body of literature (almost 100 studies) on this subject was reviewed up to August 31, 2002. This article assesses the quality of the studies and their conclusions. The authors conclude that policymakers can act to protect workers and patrons from the toxins in secondhand smoke confident in rejecting industry claims that there will be an adverse economic impact. An interesting finding in this review is that all of the studies that reported a negative economic impact related to smoke-free policies were funded by the tobacco industry, and none of these studies met all the accepted scientific criteria for quality.
- Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada (2001e) completed a summary of research on the economic impact of smoking restrictions. Of the sixteen individual studies that it reviewed, it found that in all cases there was no evidence to suggest that smoke-free ordinances had detrimental effects on either restaurant or bar sales or tourism. This review also found that in some cases business and tourism increased after smoke-free ordinances were implemented.

- The report by GPI Atlantic (2001), who was commissioned by the Nova Scotia Department of Health to study the economic impact of smoke-free workplaces, similarly concluded that smoke-free legislation has no adverse impact on business and may in fact be good for business.
- A study by KPMG (2002) on the economic impact of the smoke-free by-laws on the hospitality industry in Ottawa concluded that the smoke-free by-law there has had little or no negative impact on the hospitality industry as a whole (including restaurants, bars, hotels, and tourism), and that in some cases revenues increased following smoke-free legislation.

Some presenters suggested that although the predominant and overriding benefit of smoke-free public places and workplaces is improved health protection for people who work in and attend these shared places, there are additional benefits to smoke-free places which should be noted. They proposed that smoke-free indoor environments require less cleaning, maintenance and repairs, that their fire insurance premiums are often lower, and that heating and cooling costs may be reduced due to less aggressive ventilation requirements.

7. IMPROVED VENTILATION/ DESIGNATED SMOKING ROOMS

Some people and organizations suggested that the establishment of a standard and verifiable minimum level of air quality rather than a blanket ban would best meet the health concerns and interests of all Manitobans. Some people pointed to the willingness of the Manitoba hospitality industry to provide cleaner air through state of the art ventilation and air purification systems, and designated smoking rooms (DSRs). Such rooms allow smoking under conditions that separate the air where smoking is allowed from the non-smoking area. Several presenters pointed to the situation in BC where standards

have been set for designated smoking rooms with improved ventilation systems based on negative air pressure principles for patrons and workers. Some suggested service-free rooms be established in bars and legions in order to allow patrons to smoke but still protect workers.

In response to these suggestions, several presenters noted that many governments and health organizations have provided clear explanations as to why ventilation technology and designated smoking rooms do not work. In terms of ventilation technology, presenters noted that in order to completely clear the air of all tobacco smoke residue and therefore reduce the carcinogenic risk to acceptable levels, the ventilation rates would need to be improved 270 times, which would “create a virtual windstorm indoors” (American’s for Nonsmoker’s Rights, cited in PSFC, 2001d). Many presenters said that scientific bodies have tried to find an acceptable ventilation standard, but these same bodies have estimated that even under optimal conditions (i.e. use of newer methods such as displacement ventilation) only 90 per cent of the smoke could be removed (PSFC, 2001c). These presenters noted that new ventilation technology (if operated and maintained properly) can therefore remove a significant proportion, but they pointed out, however, that the nose test is not an accurate one - just because the air is not blue, does not mean there are not harmful toxins present. Several presenters expressed concern that ventilation systems may even delude non-smokers into a false sense of protection. A few presenters noted that, in addition to the limitations of the technology, there are questions around who tests the units for air quality and exposed smoking particulate matter left over, and who certifies that such units are installed, maintained and cleaned appropriately on a timely and scheduled basis.

Many presenters argued that, from a health point of view, designated smoking rooms (DSRs) also fall short of the health protection that is warranted. Some presenters explained that, if ventilation is temporarily disrupted or in poor repair, or doors are opened frequently (such as when customers enter and exit), smoke drifts throughout the establishment. Other presenters noted that, even if DSRs are service-free, workers will still have to enter the rooms to clean and maintain them, and to attend to any problems that may arise.

Several presenters observed that designated smoking rooms have been shown to cause complications in other jurisdictions and are not supported by any major health organizations. Other presenters noted that there are no accepted standards to reference for performance of DSRs. It was noted that the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) sets standards for ventilation rates. These are the industry norms throughout North America and many other parts of the world. Several presenters told the Task Force that ASHRAE updated their standards in 1999 to indicate that there is “no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke” (PSFC, 2001c).

There were many reasons provided as to why ventilation technology and DSRs do not work, but the majority of presenters who were opposed to these strategies concluded that, given that there are no known safe levels of second-hand smoke, and no known ventilation systems that will reduce the levels to zero, these strategies are ineffective means of protecting the public and workers from second-hand smoke.

“No agency involved in setting occupational exposure limits has found an acceptable level of exposure to second-hand smoke.”

8. PREVENTION, EDUCATION & CESSATION

Several Manitobans strongly suggested that more resources should be put towards prevention, education, and cessation efforts rather than legislation, because more could be accomplished this way in terms of reducing smoking rates. Some people thought that it made more sense to prevent people from starting to smoke in the first place, rather than trying to regulate the activity. Some presenters argued that bans just move the smokers and do not eliminate the smoke. Views seemed to be split evenly as to whether or not increasing the cost of cigarettes would deter people from starting or continuing to smoke.

In addition to the more general recommendation regarding prevention, the following specific suggestions were made by a few presenters as to how smoking can be prevented and the public (particularly youth) can be more protected:

- Clearly indicate on all employment applications that the establishment is a smoking one, and let people choose whether or not they want to work there;
- Sell cigarettes only at MLCC outlets; and,
- Raise the smoking age to 19 so that it is no longer on school grounds.

Many presenters indicated that while prevention, education and cessation are important components of an effective tobacco control strategy, provincial smoke-free legislation would be a fundamental part of a comprehensive approach to tobacco control.

“Education and example are the strongest catalysts to change how adults and children perceive smoking while strategy and policy are necessary to protect all Canadians from environmental tobacco smoke.”

9. HEALTH ISSUE IS PARAMOUNT/HEALTH BENEFITS

A powerful theme that ran through many of the presentations was that, with respect to ETS the health issue is paramount. Others noted further that ETS exposure is a public health hazard that is entirely preventable.

“ETS is a public health issue not an economic issue.”

Several presenters suggested that, besides protecting the health of non-smokers, smoke-free spaces create supportive environments for smokers who want to quit. It was explained that public policy which eliminates second-hand smoke from all indoor places and workplaces prevents addiction by reducing visibility of smoking in society, and assists smokers with cessation by increasing the intervals between cigarettes, and reducing the cues and opportunities to smoke.

“[A smoking ban would] make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

Many presenters, particularly health care professionals, indicated that if a smoking ban were implemented, cost savings will be realized in the health care system in the short-term (fewer emergency room visits from adults and children with asthma), medium-term (fewer in-hospital treatments for adults with heart and respiratory conditions) and long-term (decreased cancer rates). Several presenters pointed to a piece of research done in Helena, Montana (Smoking: Heart attacks drop after ban, 2003). In this research it was noted that “Heart attacks fell by more than half in the summer of 2002 after voters passed a broad indoor smoking ban, suggesting that cleaning up the air in bars and restaurants quickly improves health for everyone.” The ban lasted for six months until enforcement was suspended after a legal challenge. After smoking returned to bars, restaurants and other public places, heart attacks climbed back to their usual level.

Several presenters also suggested that a smoking-ban is public policy that is consistent with the government’s goal to move from a reactive and acute care focused health care system to one that supports health promotion and disease prevention to a greater extent. Presenters noted that this in turn will ultimately improve the quality of life and well-being of Manitobans, and reduce smoking-related costs to the health care system.

A strong message that came through in many of the submissions was the need to prohibit smoking in public places in order to ‘denormalize’ the activity for everyone, but especially for children. It was explained that denormalization occurs by sending a strong signal that smoking and exposing others to second-hand smoke is not healthy or socially acceptable. Several presenters suggested that if children grow up in a supportive environment where tobacco is not seen as glamorous and socially acceptable they will be less likely to start smoking.

“With smoking being so widely accepted and displayed, it’s hard for us to understand why it is that we’re not supposed to do it.”

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Throughout the public consultation process, many people suggested issues that the provincial government would need to consider if it decides to proceed with a province-wide smoking ban. These issues can be grouped into seven themes as follows:

Guidelines and Definitions

At the end of the consultation process, the Chair of the Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health suggested to the Task Force that it would be very useful to develop a set of guidelines or codes of practice to accompany any provincial law that might be drafted. Several other presenters recommended further examination of implementation issues. Many people, both opposed to and supportive of a province-wide ban, commented on the need to define an “enclosed public place” and “indoor workplace” so that the legislation is clear and unambiguous.

Exemptions

Several presenters recommended that the Task Force consider exemptions (most notably for legions, private clubs, personal care homes, and tobacconists who all have unique characteristics) in the event of a province-wide smoking ban. Exemptions for bars were also recommended by some in the hospitality industry because it was felt that, given that these are establishments restricted to adults only, people have a choice whether or not they want to patronize or work in such an establishment.

The majority of presenters argued that the legislation needs to be as clear as possible and free of loopholes in order to withstand legal challenges. Many presenters noted that there are several examples of by-laws that restrict smoking in workplaces and public places, but make exceptions for bars and restaurants. These presenters expressed concern that people who work in those environments continue to be subjected to daily doses of second-hand smoke. Several of these same presenters noted that society does not ask workers in any other industry to decide whether or not they should expose themselves to harmful chemicals in order to earn a paycheck.

“...we have been treating waitresses, waiters and bartenders as second-class citizens with second-class lungs.”

The ceremonial use of tobacco was raised by only a couple of presenters, but it was felt to be an important issue, and one requiring exemption from a ban. One presenter noted that, “although tobacco is part of traditional aboriginal ceremonies, the smoking of cigarettes is not part of aboriginal culture.” It was recommended that the ceremonial use of tobacco be exempted from a ban. It was also suggested to the Task Force that further consultation should take place with the aboriginal community, in order to develop an appropriate definition of ceremonial use.

Buffer Zones

A large number of presenters proposed the idea of buffer zones outside all buildings covered under a ban, in order to prevent smoke from drifting back into these buildings, and to prevent the public and employees from having to walk through a cloud of smoke in order to enter them. There was no general agreement as to how large these buffer zones should be, however, or how they should be enforced.

Enforcement

Many people, particularly municipal officials, raised concerns about the existence of limited municipal resources to provide enforcement and questioned who is going to provide it. In Brandon and Winnipeg, by-laws banning indoor smoking are enforced differently. Brandon’s by-law is jointly enforced by municipal by-law enforcement officers and city police. In Winnipeg, enforcement is done by provincial and municipal public health inspectors. Both Brandon and Winnipeg have reported compliance rates over 80%.

Many other options were put forward for enforcement - such as workplace health and safety inspectors and liquor inspectors. Several presenters also noted the difficult situation created when community members have to police one other in small communities. Several people questioned what role the provincial government might play in enforcement.

The Task Force’s recommendation of a province-wide smoking ban would apply in all enclosed public and indoor workplaces where the provincial government has clear jurisdiction. For example, while provincial jails such as Headingley are governed by provincial policy; federal institutions such as Stony Mountain are governed by federal policy. Other areas of federal responsibility include military bases; First Nations reserves; airports; etc. The Task Force would encourage provincial officials to make other jurisdictions aware of Manitoba’s smoking policy.

Communication of the Legislation

Some presenters suggested that in the event of a province-wide smoking ban, it would be important for the government to work with labour and business to communicate the legislation (including expectations and enforcement procedures) with the public, businesses, and employees well in advance of the implementation date.

Support for Cessation

Many presenters indicated that tobacco smoking is a recognized addiction and many people have difficulty stopping. Some of these same presenters argued that an effective ban on smoking should include programs that help smokers in their efforts to quit smoking. To that end, some people suggested the provision of more cessation programs, while others recommended financial support for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) like Zyban or the Patch. A few people suggested targeting tobacco tax increases to cessation programming.

There was no clear consensus among presenters as to the most effective means of providing support for cessation. Some presenters indicated that there are many options of which NRT is only one (e.g., 1-800 lines can be implemented, or efforts can be made to advertise and connect people more effectively with appropriate programs and services).

“A comprehensive approach to smoking cessation is important (e.g., assessment, counseling, pharmacotherapy, ongoing support, and relapse prevention strategies).”

Addressing Economic Challenges

After pointing out the potential negative economic impacts of a smoking ban on individual workers and businesses, several presenters questioned whether or not there would be an opportunity for them to work with the provincial government to address the economic challenges that are anticipated following a province-wide smoking ban.