

UPDATE

SECOND-HAND SMOKE

EVERY 11 MINUTES

EVERY 11 MINUTES, A CANADIAN DIES FROM TOBACCO USE. Every 10 minutes, two Canadian teenagers start smoking cigarettes; one of them will lose her life because of it. Yearly, more than a thousand Canadians who never even smoked die — from exposure to tobacco smoke. Thousands more are diagnosed with illnesses related to tobacco use. Year in and year out, more than 45,000 Canadians perish — because of tobacco.

It doesn't have to be that way. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of premature death and disease in Canada.

In April of 2001, the Government of Canada stepped up its efforts to ensure that Canada ultimately will be smoke-free — with the launch of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy. This Strategy, representing the most significant effort Canada has ever undertaken to fight the tobacco epidemic, brings a comprehensive, integrated and sustained approach to tobacco control.

These communiqués detail some of the initiatives connected to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy.

i n i t i a t i v e s

Second-hand Smoke

In Canada each year, more than 1,000 non-smokers die of the effects of second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke consists of main-stream smoke, the smoke inhaled and exhaled by a smoker, and side-stream smoke (smoke that is released directly from the end of a burning cigarette). Second-hand smoke contains over 4,000 chemical compounds, 50 of which are associated with or known to cause cancer.

Two thirds of the smoke from a cigarette is not inhaled by the smoker; it enters the surrounding air. Second-hand smoke has at least twice the nicotine and tar as the smoke inhaled by the smoker. Regular exposure to second-hand smoke increases the chances of contracting lung disease by 25% and heart disease by 10%.

Second-hand smoke also increases chances of contracting cancer of the sinuses, brain, breast, uterine cervix and thyroid, as well as leukemia and lymphoma. It aggravates symptoms in individuals with allergies and asthma, and can cause eye, nose and throat irritations, headaches, dizziness, nausea, coughing and wheezing in otherwise healthy people.

For children and youth, who may not be in control of their environments, the damage from second-hand smoke can be more severe, as their lungs are still developing and they breathe faster than adults do. Youth exposed to second-hand smoke are at greater risk of developing chronic respiratory illnesses, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections and food allergies.

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The unborn are also negatively affected; exposure of the mother to second-hand smoke can slow the growth and development of the fetus. Postnatally second-hand smoke has been linked to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Millions of Canadians are at risk of exposure at work. Even in workplaces with designated smoking areas, most ventilation systems are rarely separate from the system serving the rest of the building. This means that Canadian workers are exposed to thousands of tasteless, odourless chemicals that remain in the air even after visible smoke has dissipated.

Focussing on the Issue

Recently Health Canada brought the issue of second-hand smoke to the attention of Canadians by way of several mass media campaigns.

Home and Family

In a government survey, approximately 800,000 Canadian children under 12 years of age reported regular exposure to second-hand smoke in their homes.

Health Canada's 'Target' campaign, directed at mainstream Canadian audiences, addressed the issue of second-hand smoke around home and family. A mother was portrayed blowing smoke rings in a room apart from where her children played. The rings floated towards her family in the next room and assumed a target shape as they hovered over her children. The tag line for this campaign was, "Is your family a target? Protect yourself. Protect your kids." This campaign was supported by printed materials which outlined the risks to children and indicated that Canadians could call Health Canada or consult its web site for information on second-hand smoke in the home.

Youth

Canada's youth-focussed campaign "Couch", comprised television and print materials for both mainstream and Aboriginal audiences. Research conducted by Health Canada has shown that young people are particularly concerned about exposing their siblings and friends to second-hand smoke, and this campaign spoke to this issue. A television ad featured young people on a couch

involuntarily exposed to tobacco smoke in a party setting, and encouraged young Canadians to protect their families and friends from second-hand smoke diseases. The print portion of the campaign appeared in public transit venues, featuring the party scene and also Jacob, a young Canadian with asthma (which is one of the more prevalent 'second-hand smoke diseases'). Again, Canadians were able to retrieve more information by calling Health Canada or consulting the www.GoSmokefree.ca web site.

Aboriginal Communities

To address the issue of second-hand smoke in Aboriginal communities, where the incidence of smoking (up to 70%) is significantly higher than the national average, Health Canada conducted campaigns called 'Labels' and 'Doctors'.

'Labels' comprised television and print advertising which asked people to consider whether, if tobacco package health warning labels were juxtaposed differently — such as on a child's toy, on a pregnant woman's stomach, or on a restaurant worker's vest — they would think twice about exposing others to second-hand smoke.

'Doctors' brought the testimony of Aboriginal health care practitioners, via radio and print, to Native Canadians. The practitioners spoke of their experiences caring for individuals suffering from exposure to second-hand smoke, and encouraged smokers to think twice before lighting up. Both campaigns carried the tag line, "That's the good that you can do." Canadians were able to call for information, consult the Health Canada web site, or retrieve the 'Doctors' printed materials via their health care providers or community health care agencies.

Public Spaces

The 1989 *Non-Smokers' Health Act* restricts smoking in federal and federally regulated workplaces, on inter-provincial transit and on airplanes. Most provinces have enacted laws that address the issue of second-hand smoke in public places, and more than 300 municipalities are currently at different stages in the passage of bylaws around this issue. However, there is no consistent level of protection from one area to the next.

To highlight the issue of 11 million workers who do not have full protection from second-hand smoke in their workplaces, and to support provincial/territorial and municipal activities to implement smoke free workplaces and public places, Health Canada recently brought the testimony of Heather Crowe to the attention of Canadians.



Heather is a woman who never smoked but is dying from tobacco induced lung cancer, caused by years of work in the hospitality sector. She appeared on television, in movie theatres, in transit shelters and in print, in a campaign that delivered the message: "Some tobacco companies say that second-hand smoke bothers people. Health Canada says it kills."

I felt really bad when I saw your commercial because you didn't smoke, and you have a really bad disease. I wish that smokers would just stop smoking because it doesn't do any good to us or them. Thank you for being so nice and kind to us. I hope your last two years are the best years in your life.

— *from a letter sent to Heather Crowe by a Canadian school child*

Subsequently, Health Canada again featured Heather Crowe, this time in a Canada-wide cinema ad with Barb Tarbox. Ms. Tarbox, before her death in the fall of 2003 from lung cancer, crusaded in schools across Canada, calling the addictive nature of tobacco to the immediate attention of young people and imploring them never to start smoking, or to quit before it becomes too late. The new ad with Barb and Heather pointed out that tobacco smoke does not discriminate — it harms both smokers and non-smokers. Canadians could again consult Health Canada for more information regarding second-hand smoke in the workplace. In fact, the information has had broad appeal. Numerous organizations within Canada, in the U.S. and abroad have borrowed the Heather Crowe materials as a means of increasing awareness of the impacts of second-hand smoke in the workplace.

"Some tobacco companies say that second-hand smoke bothers people. Health Canada says it kills."

Acting on the Issue

Public Places

The *Smoke-Free Public Places: You Can Get There* toolkit (which was pilot tested in several cities in collaboration with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities) helps towns and cities to introduce effective non-smoking bylaws. It offers hands-on, easy-to-use resources to help municipalities and communities through the various stages of planning, implementing and evaluating non-smoking bylaws and policies in public places. Included in the toolkit are: an overview of the current non-smoking bylaw situation in Canada; a discussion of key issues (such as the benefits and challenges of non-smoking bylaws); the steps required to get a bylaw in place; promotion and communication ideas; health and economic information, examples of bylaws, sample surveys and evaluations; and six detailed case studies.

Workplaces

Smoke-free policies help to protect the health of all workers, smokers and non-smokers alike, by reducing or eliminating the harmful effects of exposure to second-hand smoke in the workplace. Smoking restrictions also encourage employees who smoke to cut down or quit, and help prevent relapse among those who have become smoke-free.

Towards a Healthier Workplace: A Guidebook on Tobacco Control Policies is a Health Canada resource designed to help employers and employees preparing to create or strengthen tobacco control policies in their workplaces.

The guidebook is designed for use by any Canadian workplace (small/large, industrial/corporate), and includes rationales for implementing a non-smoking policy, policy options and samples, steps for implementing a policy, information on evaluation, cessation information, tools for organizers (e.g. step-by-step guide,

employee survey, how to estimate the cost of smoking in your workplace), employee handouts (e.g. health information, how to help a friend quit smoking), six case studies (Alcan Inc. — Quebec; Boeing — Ontario; Lakeland College — Alberta; Q94 FM Radio — Manitoba; The Red Shoe Pub — Nova Scotia; Royal Ottawa Hospital — Ontario), and references to sources of related information.

The guidebook was pilot tested in ten diverse Canadian communities. Following are samples of feedback provided to Health Canada.

The guidebook is an excellent tool. We are now seeing results that we only thought about before. ... The guidebook made users feel confident and empowered. We have solid facts and can deal with rumours. ... The Guidebook and local statistics are very powerful. The quality was there in the guidebook to enable us to present to the business sector and to respond to challenges. ... The guidebook provided information needed to develop a very professional, eye-catching brochure with outstanding validity and accuracy. The case studies helped the city clerk's office understand what issues you should really try to include in the public relations strategy. ... The Guidebook breaks down major concepts into easily understood elements. Get it all at the beginning and read it all before you begin. And get it out there — into people's hands.

Young People

Health Canada's Youth Action Committee (YAC) on Tobacco Issues has engaged Canadian youth in order to help define an understanding of issues around second-hand smoke as they pertain to young people. Health Canada has learned that adolescents tend to be natural advocates; what they require are appropriate resources, skills and supports. By engaging youth on the issue of second-hand smoke, Health Canada has learned how youth-appropriate government priorities, programmes and policy decisions can be shaped, in order to better fortify young people as they confront second-hand smoke in their environments.

In 2002 Health Canada organized the Smokefree Spaces National Youth Conference, bringing together a diverse group of young persons (both smokers and non-smokers) to discuss second-hand smoke. The conference generated a wealth of ideas around resources which would assist young people in advocating for and developing smoke free environments, and was the impetus for the compilation of *Health Canada's Smokefree Spaces Activist Toolkit*.

The *Smokefree Spaces Activist Toolkit*, a bilingual CD ROM and website developed by Health Canada, is intended to inspire, inform and equip Canadian youth with the tools and resources they need to take action on second-hand smoke where they live, learn, work and play. It does so by providing information, ready-to-use resources and tips for working with local community leaders, parents, teachers and the media.

Alright, I'll be honest with you, I didn't check out the Toolkit as soon as it got to delivered to me. But when I did — MAN ALIVE!!! (I know that sounds corny — but I found the entire kit Amazing!) I think it's great and provides SO much of the needed information for youth to get involved, and it cemented my feelings about re-applying to the Youth Action Committee.

— Pam Stewart, age 16, member of YAC from St. Andrew's, NB

You and Me

YAC has not been the only venue where youth have been the source of inspiration and action around second-hand smoke. In 2001, for example, Health Canada embraced an idea from students at Hugh Boyd Secondary School in Richmond, British Columbia. Health Canada helped to promote the students' Blue Ribbon campaign for people working together to clear the air of second-hand tobacco smoke. The students determined that dealing with second-hand smoke starts with positive, constructive dialogue, identifying the issue publicly, and wearing one's convictions for all to see — hence the blue ribbon. Health Canada helped to make Hugh Boyd Secondary's campaign Canada's Blue Ribbon campaign, by promoting it via the Web, in published materials and within public venues. Blue Ribbon publications deliver advice and information on the various ways to help clear the air together — smokers and non-smokers — 'you and me, smokefree'.

HEALTH CANADA'S MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAMMING AROUND SECOND-HAND SMOKE HAVE GENERATED INCREASED DEMAND FOR INFORMATION ABOUT ASSOCIATED HEALTH RISKS, AND FOR TOOLS TO CURTAIL AND ELIMINATE SECOND-HAND SMOKE IN FAMILY AND HOME ENVIRONMENTS, AS WELL AS IN WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC PLACES. ACROSS CANADA, THE DRIVE TOWARDS SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS IS ACCELERATING — MORE THAN 300 MUNICIPALITIES ARE CURRENTLY EITHER SMOKE-FREE OR WORKING TOWARDS BYLAWS PROHIBITING SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES. HEALTH CANADA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT SECOND-HAND SMOKE IMPACTS THE HEALTH OF ALL CANADIANS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE MOMENTUM TOWARDS SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS WITH MESSAGING AND PROGRAMMING WHICH ADDRESS THIS SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUE.