

Newspaper

All Local newspapers starting 15/05/02

Chatham Daily News **Friday** 10/05/02 or 17/05/02

The Chatham-Kent Coalition on Smoking OR Health would like to respond to recently published articles that express the views of the "Courtesy of Choice" organization regarding the proposed Smoking in Public Places and Workplaces by-law. Courtesy of Choice is a nation wide organization that represents the hospitality industry. Small local groups appear in areas that are working to implement smoke-free by-laws. The public needs to know the national Courtesy of Choice organization has received approximately \$800,000.00 in funding annually, over the last 3-4 years, from the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council. This was revealed in 2001 by David Laundy, a representative from the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council, during an interview in British Columbia.

It is apparent the debate about the smoke-free by-law has strayed from its original purpose into misleading discussion of rights and economics. It is now time to address a number of issues and to provide some background in order to set the record straight.

Smoke-free by-laws are first and foremost public health measures to protect people from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. Second-hand smoke is more toxic than the smoke inhaled directly by smokers. The reason is because it's emitted at a lower temperature, which results in incomplete combustion, and because the particles of second-hand smoke are smaller they are breathed deeper into the lungs. According to the *United States Environmental Protection Agency*¹, a non-smoker can inhale 10 times more carboxylic compounds than the smoker inhales directly, and some human carcinogens are more than 30 times more concentrated in side stream smoke. Second-hand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals, at least 43 of which are suspected carcinogens. It contains tar, benzene, vinyl chloride, cyanide, arsenic, nickel, and chromium and causes more deaths than all other workplace-regulated carcinogens put together.

Business owners opposing a 100% smoke-free by-law state they feel they should have freedom of choice to determine their own smoking policies. Second-hand smoke exposure, particularly of workers, is a serious health concern and not an issue that should be left to business owners to address. Hospitality proprietors cannot choose whether to observe food safety standards, liquor license conditions, building and fire code standards, zoning requirements, or any number of other local by-law or legislative requirements. Similarly, the issue is one of health, not freedom of choice. With smoke-free places, smokers can still smoke in appropriate places.

There are numerous studies in the United States and Canada that show there is no net negative economic impact from smoke-free policies. In Ottawa, where all hospitality premises became 100% last August 1st, a study by the accounting firm KPMG shows that Ottawa hospitality employment was up following implementation of their by-law, employment insurance claims were down after August 1, and restaurant bankruptcies

were also down after August 1. Following the January 1, 2000 implementation of a 100% smoke-free by-law in Waterloo region, the number of food and beverage premises opening in the region increased during the year over the previous year.

Last may a telephone survey, on Smoking in Public Places, was conducted in Chatham-Kent by the University of Western Ontario. This survey was requested by the Chatham-Kent Coalition on Smoking OR Health and paid for by the Community Heart Health Coalition of Chatham-Kent. A total of 401 people completed the survey ensuring a percent for error of +/- 5%. The survey found that both smokers and non-smokers support the most restrictive smoke-free policies. They also found that both are concerned about the long-term health effects. To briefly address the economic issue, the survey also reflected the potential for a positive net change in business in such places as banquet halls 11.75%, Bars 2.25%, Bingo Halls 4.5%, Donut Shops 12.22% and Restaurants 11.72%.

Decisions about important public health issues like second-hand smoke exposure should not be made based on fears or predictions, but rather on hard information. Objective evidence from every jurisdiction that has implemented smoke-free policies shows that they do not cause negative economic impacts. New studies confirming this continue to be published. While proprietors' concerns may be understandable, they are not backed up by reality.

Pay it forward and build a HEALTHIER Chatham-Kent.

¹ *Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders*, EPA/600/6-90/006F, Dec. 1992

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