

**Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
Campagne Ontarienne D'Action Contre le Tabac**

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Founding Agencies:

Canadian Cancer Society–Ontario Division
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario
Non-Smokers' Rights Association
Ontario Lung Association
Ontario Medical Association

Supporting Agencies:

Alcohol and Drug Concerns Inc.
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Cancer Care Ontario
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies
Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors
Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
Ontario Physical and Health Education Association
Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
The Ontario College of Family Physicians

OVER 6 IN 10 ONTARIANS NOW LIVE IN COMMUNITIES WITH 100% SMOKE-FREE BAR, RESTAURANT RULES

Progress particularly dramatic since 2000

Toronto – 63.3% of the Ontario population now lives in towns, cities and counties which have passed, and in some cases implemented, 100% smoke-free bar and restaurant bylaws, according to an analysis by Ontario health agencies. Another 8.4% live in communities where votes on 100% smoke-free bylaws are pending.

“There has been tremendous progress since 2000, when bars and restaurants in the Region of Waterloo, Guelph and Peterborough became the first to go 100% smoke-free,” said Michael Perley, Director of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, a coalition of provincial health agencies. “Since then, communities in all parts of the province, from Cornwall to Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, to Grey and Dufferin counties and Durham Region, have passed similar bylaws. Earlier this week, Barrie became the latest municipality to take the smoke-free step.”

Perley went on to say that the process in many municipalities has been controversial, and some have had to make repeated efforts before their Councils will adopt complete prohibitions.

“Communities like Kingston and Sault Ste. Marie have debated the issue for several years, but it's the prolonged debate and resulting public education which in many cases has made the final step to 100% smoke-free possible.”

Perley noted another important factor is increasing agreement that there should be a “level playing field” for all businesses, rather than bylaws which phase-in smoke-free requirements in establishments such as restaurants but not bars. “During the past three years, we have seen more and more bar and restaurant owners appear at municipal council meetings to demand equal treatment for all businesses. Exceptions like separate smoking rooms in some premises, leave the health of some workers unprotected, and allow some premises, but not others, to attract smokers.”

“Just as we have clean water and food safety standards for all communities, we also need uniform smoke-free rules to protect all workers and patrons from this proven cause of cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems,” Perley said.

We are now at a point where the province should step in and finish the job, as many communities which still allow smoking have neither the enforcement resources nor the political will to act.

The Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco is a coalition of provincial health agencies that have been working together since the early '90s in support of the implementation of effective tobacco control policies in the province of Ontario.

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For more: Michael Perley 416-340-2992 (office)
416-709-9075 (cell)

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