

May 31, 2006

Toronto Protected by New Smoke-Free Act

Toronto Public Health inspectors are visiting restaurants, bars, private clubs and other entertainment facilities to ensure operators are informed and in compliance with the provincial government's new Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which came into effect today, May 31, 2006.

"This new Act protects employees and the vast majority of non-smokers from second-hand smoke. We support this new Act, and expect that the majority of restaurants, bars and other facilities will be in compliance," said Medical Officer of Health Dr. David McKeown.

Tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death and illness in Ontario, killing more than 16,000 Ontarians every year, or 44 people every day.

"This Act helps new generations of young people to grow up in smoke-free environments, and will hopefully discourage them from starting to smoke," said Dr. McKeown. "From a public-health perspective, this initiative takes us all a little closer to leading healthier, longer lives."

The province-wide Act prevents smoking in all enclosed public spaces and workplaces, including restaurants, bars, schools, private clubs, sports arenas, entertainment venues, work vehicles and offices. It strengthens laws against tobacco sales to minors and restricts the display of tobacco products in retail outlets, with a complete ban on their display by May 31, 2008.

In the City of Toronto, private clubs will now be smoke-free, and Designated Smoking Rooms can no longer be used for smoking. Ashtrays and health warning signs must be removed.

For further information on the changes for Toronto, visit our Web site at: www.toronto.ca/health.

Call the Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 for information about quitting smoking.

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