

DEPUTATION FOR BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING, September 30, 2013

Re: Report HL24.3Smoke-Free Toronto: Strengthening Protection

Date: September 25, 2013

Dear Chair Mihevc and Members of the Board of Health,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a response to this report.

We represent the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre as members of the Odette Cancer Centre's Smoking Cessation Program.

Most people are unaware of the dangers of second hand smoke exposure in open public spaces. Second-hand smoke is the third leading cause of lung cancer as well as a risk factor for increasing the chance of additional cancers. It can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and increase breathing problems such as emphysema, pneumonia, and bronchitis. Second-hand smoke causes itchy eyes, runny nose, coughing, wheezing, sore throat, nausea, dizziness and headaches.

Additionally, second hand smoke is harmful to children. Infants exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke are at greater risk of developing pneumonia, bronchitis and are more likely to need hospital care. Exposure to second-hand smoke puts children at greater risk of developing asthma. These children are also at greater risk of developing fluid in the middle ear which may cause loss of hearing if not treated.

Research shows there is no safe level of second-hand smoke, even outdoors.

In 2007, the Cancer Program at Sunnybrook led the initiative to make our hospital grounds completely smoke free. Additionally we produced a toolkit for other hospitals wishing to implement similar programs. As a publically funded health institution, we are committed to working towards smoke free living.

In 2006, the government of Ontario passed the Smoke Free Ontario Act. This legislation formed the basis for a comprehensive public policy to reduce smoking related illness. The Act banned smoking in public places such as hospitals, schools, restaurants and bars, and restricted the display of tobacco products. However, the Act does not entirely ban smoking from hospital grounds.

From the September 16, 2013 Report - Smoke-Free Toronto: Strengthening Protection – the Medical Officer of Health recommended that The Board of Health forward this report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and request that the Minister amend the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2006* to:

- a. prohibit smoking on all uncovered bar and restaurant patios
- b. prohibit smoking on all hospital grounds

Our focus here is Part b, to prohibit smoking on all hospital grounds. The Odette Cancer Centre's smoking cessation team was engaged in the stakeholder discussions held earlier this year and fully supports this proposed amendment. The most compelling rationale for banning smoking on hospital grounds relates to protecting everyone from second-hand smoke and the associated health risks.

Second-hand smoke exposure can be especially harmful for any patients who are recovering from their treatments and who do not want to be exposed to these harmful effects. As a healthcare institution, we recognize that we are role models and have an important influence on our patients. This is aligned with our goal of encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

Despite the fact that we have smoke free grounds, enforcing this policy has been an ongoing challenge. The differences between the the Smoke Free Ontario Act and the Sunnybrook Smoke Free Grounds Policy, especially with regards to signage and enforcement considerations, are confusing to patients and visitors. It can be intimidating for staff to ask smokers to stop smoking on Sunnybrook grounds as many smokers become confrontational. Security personnel also find it difficult to do their jobs to enforce this policy on our large, 99 acre property. A City of Toronto bylaw banning smoking from hospital grounds would alleviate these problems, provide a consistent message and help avoid conflicts among staff, patients, visitors and security over enforcement of smoke-free policies currently in place. Such a by-law would assist us in our goals to provide a healthy environment for our patients, staff and visitors.

Hospitals that implement completely smoke free policies exceed the requirements of the Smoke Free Ontario Act. These hospitals promote healthier and safer workplaces for their employees, give a consistent message to their patients about reducing the adverse effects of smoking, provide real opportunities for smoking cessation, and show leadership in their communities by promoting healthy public policy. This is a growing trend; close to 50% of U.S. hospitals currently have smoke-free policies in place. The Cancer Prevention Program at the Odette Cancer Centre has further extended its leadership role by investigating the feasibility of a completely smoke- free Toronto Central LHIN and has been participating with other community stakeholders such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and Toronto Public Health in this regard.

The Odette Cancer Centre offers smoking cessation support to patients, family members and staff with a goal to provide the best possible outcome for their treatments. All healthcare professionals are trained to encourage patients who smoke to accept treatment. Patients are asked about their smoking status and the 5 A Model is followed to help them in their quit attempts. Recently, smoking cessation has been formally recognized as a best practice at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. A smoking cessation committee meets monthly to discuss the opportunities and challenges of this program. Awareness has been raised throughout the Sunnybrook community with displays and communication strategies during National Non Smoking Week and World No Tobacco Day, regarding the harmful effects of tobacco use and the benefits of smoking cessation.

It was stated in the September 24, 2012 Staff Report from the Medical Officer of Health that “in contrast to several other Ontario municipalities, there are currently no by-laws in Toronto that restrict smoking on hospital grounds. However, there is strong public interest and scientific evidence supporting such prohibitions.” It continued on to state that “tobacco use kills more than 13,000 Ontarians a year, and is responsible for an estimated \$7.73 billion annually in health care and lost productivity costs.” At Sunnybrook, before implementing our smoke free grounds policy, we conducted an employee survey which showed strong support for smoke free grounds. Recognizing these facts and knowing on a professional level the impact that smoking and second hand smoke has on the health of Torontonians, we recommend that the City of Toronto continue to be a leader in tobacco control by prohibiting smoking on all Toronto hospital grounds leading to the protection of workers and residents from second hand smoke.

Residents in Toronto deserve and are entitled to a smoke free environment. Patients, visitors and employees of Toronto hospitals should not risk exposure to second hand smoke. A high level of support exists to ban smoking from hospital grounds. We support the recommendations of this report to address expansion of the smoke free laws to incorporate hospital grounds and to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.

We will be observing this process closely. We have confidence that this report will continue to make the required changes to the City of Toronto bylaws, such that all hospital grounds will be smoke free.

Thank you again for your time and attention.

On behalf of the Odette Cancer Centre at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre,

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