

HL 24.



REMARKS TO THE TORONTO BOARD OF HEALTH
ON STRENGTHENING SMOKE-FREE TORONTO

Michael Perley
Director

Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco

September 30, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present in support of the Medical Officer of Health's recommendations to make a number of outdoor spaces smoke-free.

The Ontario Campaign's first interventions in support of more smoke-free spaces in Toronto took place during the chaotic 1996-7 debates and arguments over the smoke-free restaurant and bar bylaw for the old City of Toronto. I am personally very glad that today's discussion is taking place in an environment where smoke-free indoor spaces are supported by the large majority of Torontonians.

This is part of a trend across all of Ontario, as a 2011 Ipsos Reid poll clearly showed. In that poll, 87% of Ontarians said smoke-free legislation had had a positive impact in their lives and increased their enjoyment of restaurants. Seventy-four percent said it had made them visit restaurants and bars more often. Over half of smokers – 56% – said smoke-free legislation had made them enjoy bars and restaurants more.

Dr. McKeown proposes to extend protection from the physical health effects of second-hand smoke exposure and from the important pro-tobacco image that those smoking outdoors present to our young people. The proposals targeted at outdoor sports fields, parks, beaches and public squares will all have a significant influence on the visible acceptability of smoking. The same goes for the proposal to ban smoking on bar and restaurant patios: this setting is the last hospitality venue where a positive – and deceptive – association between tobacco use and the pleasures of socializing with friends and family is portrayed to the larger community. The unlevel playing field that bar and restaurant patio smoking creates between establishments that have patios and those who do not, will also be addressed by this proposal. The health effects of worker exposure to second-hand smoke in patio settings has been documented in Dr. McKeown's report, and I don't need to repeat it here.

We note the report's recommendation that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care be asked to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to prohibit smoking on bar and restaurant patios and hospital grounds. While a provincial solution to these issues may ultimately be enacted, the uncertain state of the legislature's life span makes the prospect for such action uncertain as well. For Toronto to move ahead in this direction would avoid this problem, and would send an important signal to the rest of the province that has not yet acted on these issues, that such action is both timely and necessary.

As always, the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco looks forward to working with the Board, the Health Department and Council to help ensure that the most pro-active tobacco control policies are put in place for our great city.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present today.

Founding Agencies

Canadian Cancer Society
Ontario Division

Heart and Stroke
Foundation of Ontario

Non Smokers
Rights Association

Ontario Medical Association

Supporting Agencies

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

Ontario Public Health
Association

Physicians for a
Smoke-Free Canada

Registered Nurses
Association of Ontario

The Ontario College
of Family Physicians

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