



18 Wynford Drive, Suite 401  
Toronto, ON M3C 0K8  
416.864.9911  
416.864.9916 Fax  
[olalung@on.lung.ca](mailto:olalung@on.lung.ca)

**Ontario Respiratory Care Society**  
[orcs@on.lung.ca](mailto:orcs@on.lung.ca)

**Ontario Thoracic Society**  
[ots@on.lung.ca](mailto:ots@on.lung.ca)

Tuesday, November-03-15

Your Worship Mayor John Tory  
Toronto City Councillors  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: LS7.2 – Prohibiting Hookah (Waterpipe) Use in Licensed Establishments.

Dear Your Worship, Mayor Tory and Toronto City Councillors.

On October 22, item LS7.2 – Prohibiting Hookah (Waterpipe) Use in Licensed Establishments – was debated at the Licencing and Standards Committee. Committee members heard deputations about the harmful health effects associated with hookah use; about the impact of prohibiting hookah on businesses; and about the cultural aspects of using waterpipes.

Today, during the full council debate on this issue, you will hear many of the same arguments. I am writing to you today to summarize the Ontario Lung Association position on this issue and, I hope, to persuade you to vote in favour of banning hookah (waterpipe) use on licensed premises in Toronto.

The fundamental argument is quite simple: our lungs are made to breathe fresh air. Inhaling smoke and other products of combustion – whether it's from tobacco or shisha – can cause or aggravate chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. There is no safe level of exposure to smoke from waterpipes.

In fact, some aspects of hookah use that make it potentially more dangerous than smoking tobacco. For example, a typical shisha session lasting one hour can expose users and café staff to 100 to 200 times more smoke than one cigarette. Spend an hour in a hookah café and you'll inhale the same amount of carbon monoxide as smoking five cigarettes. For a café worker doing an eight-hour shift, the health impact can be severe.

We are, of course, mindful of the cultural aspects of smoking shisha but we believe that protecting an individual's right to breathe should always take precedence. In our submission to the Licensing and Standards Committee, we also pointed out that a number of countries in the Middle East, where hookah has its cultural and historic roots, have imposed bans or restrictions on the practice. They include Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

On behalf of the Ontario Lung Association and every Torontonian who breathes, I urge you to take a deep breath of clean, fresh air and vote for lung health by prohibiting the use of hookah (waterpipe) in licensed establishments in our city.

Sincerely,

Chris Yaccato  
Provincial Manager, Government Relations & Public Affairs  
Ontario Lung Association  
[cyaccato@on.lung.ca](mailto:cyaccato@on.lung.ca)  
416-303-4589

cc.  
Dr. David McKeown, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Ms. Ulli S. Watkiss, Clerk, City of Toronto