

MEMO

TO: Board of Health
FROM: Councillor Joe Mihevc
RE: Youth Exposure to Smoking in Movies
DATE: May 31, 2018

Background:

Due to increased regulations on the advertising and marketing of commercial tobacco, smoking in movies remains one of the last avenues for tobacco companies to advertise their products to captive youth audiences. Longitudinal research has demonstrated that commercial tobacco images in movies recruit new smokers and subsequently lead to an increase in preventable tobacco related deaths and disease¹.

Research has indicated that a higher exposure to tobacco imagery in movies increases the uptake of smoking among youth and undermines tobacco prevention efforts¹. In Ontario, between 2004 and 2014, 86 percent of new release movies containing tobacco imagery were youth-rated, a much higher proportion than in the U.S. (54 percent)². As a result, Ontario youth had greater exposure to on-screen tobacco imagery than their U.S. counterparts. In Ontario alone, this will result in an estimated 185,000 children and teens (0-17) living today who will become commercial tobacco consumers due to exposure to on-screen smoking in movies¹.

In Toronto, the Youth Health Action Network (YHAN) and Investment in Youth Engagement (IYE) youth leaders have been working to shed light on this issue and have participated in a number of smoke-free movies initiatives over the last decade. These activities were reported to the Board of Health on October 22, 2012 (see <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.HL17.3>).

Toronto Public Health is a member of the Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies (OCSFM) and has endorsed actions to reduce youth exposure to on-screen smoking.



councillor_mihevc@toronto.ca
 joemihevc.com
 @joemihevc
 facebook.com/joemihevc

CITY HALL

100 Queen St W, Suite B35
 Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
 T 416.392.0208
 F 416.392.7466

COMMUNITY OFFICE

747 St. Clair Ave W
 Toronto, ON M6C 4A4
 T 416.392.7460
 F 416.392.7466

Motion:

1. The Board of Health endorse action on smoke-free movies to reduce youth exposure to on screen smoking.
2. The Board of Health request the Ontario Minister of Government and Consumer Services to designate movies with smoking and tobacco product placement an 18A rating.
3. The Board of Health forward their decision to the Ontario Film Review Board for information.

Sincerely

Councillor Joe Mihevc
Ward 21, St. Paul's West

¹ Luk, R., and Schwartz, R. *Youth Exposure to Tobacco in Movies in Ontario, Canada: 2004-2014* (2015). Retrieved from https://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/special_movies.pdf

² Babayan, R., Luk, R., Schwartz, R. *Exposure to On-Screen Tobacco in Movies among Ontario Youth, 2004 – 2013*. (2014). Retrieved from <https://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/OTRU-Smoking-in-Movies.pdf>