



Deputation Presentation to: Hamilton Board of Health

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Deputation Presentation by: Linda Wu

Good morning.

My name is Linda Wu and I am a volunteer with the Hamilton Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about why the Canadian Cancer Society fully supports the creation of outdoor smoke-free spaces.

Canadian Cancer Society volunteers and staff are proud to be leading the charge in the fight against cancer. Our fight is a big one. Cancer is a powerful enemy. In fact, every 3 minutes, another Canadian is faced with fighting cancer.

Cancer takes the lives of more people in Canada than heart disease, strokes, respiratory diseases, pneumonia, diabetes, liver disease and HIV/AIDS combined. According to the 2010 *Canadian Cancer Statistics*, it is estimated that in 2010, 28,200 Ontarians died from cancer, and another 65,100 Ontarians were diagnosed with the disease.¹

Within the next decade, Ontario will see an unprecedented rise of 40 per cent in the number of people with cancer largely due to an aging and growing population. To put the increase into perspective, in 2007, 172 people in Ontario were diagnosed with cancer each day. By 2017, that number of newly diagnosed cases is expected to jump to 228 per day (83,220 per year), unless there are significant changes made related to cancer prevention.² Therefore, it is important that all levels of government play a role in creating healthy public policy.

Today I am here to emphasize the need for the creation of outdoor smoke-free spaces in Hamilton. Creating smoke-free spaces will further protect the health of our community by increasing protection against second hand smoke, encouraging smokers to quit or cut back and decreasing negative role modeling for children.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society/National Cancer Institute of Canada: *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2010*, Toronto, Canada, 2010.

² Cancer Care Ontario. (2008). *Ontario Cancer Plan: 2008-2011 Backgrounder*. Available at: http://www.cancercare.on.ca/documents/Backgrounder_OCP.pdf.



Tobacco use is directly responsible for 30 per cent of all cancer deaths and 85 per cent of lung cancer deaths. The need for increased tobacco control is still great. Today over two million Ontarians smoke, thousands start every day, and every year approximately 13,000 Ontarians will die from tobacco use.

Second hand smoke is toxic, and there is no safe level of exposure. It contains over 4,000 chemicals including at least 50 known cancer-causing substances. Each year, more than 1,000 non-smoking Canadians die from second hand smoke.

Even outdoors second hand smoke is dangerous. Studies conducted at Stanford University concluded that smoke levels within half a meter of a single cigarette, depending on air conditions, are comparable to indoor smoke levels measured in previous studies of smoky bars³.

These findings are particularly important when we consider children at parks and playgrounds. Children, especially infants and toddlers, are not able to choose to relocate themselves when faced with smoking. Even if they are able to move, it is unfair to expect children to choose between physical activity on the playground and a smoke-free space.

There is public support for the creation of outdoor smoke-free spaces. Hamilton Public Health conducted a survey of residents, including smokers and non-smokers, who are users of outdoor municipal recreational areas. Results showed support for regulating smoking in outdoor municipal recreational areas had a ratio of more than 4:1. Among sports associations, 88.9 per cent of respondents supported prohibiting smoking in City parks, outdoor pools, City playgrounds, public beaches, skateboard parks, recreational trails and at parades. Additionally, 83.3 per cent supported prohibiting smoking on recreation centre and arena property and recreational or sporting fields⁴.

³ Klepeis, N.; Ott, W; Switzer, P.; Real-Time Measurement of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Particles. *Journal of Air and Waste Management Association*, 2007 v. 57

⁴ Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Public Health Services Department
Information Report May 25, 2010 to Mayor and Board of Health Members.



Smoking bans can have positive effects for smokers. Research has shown that smoking restrictions increase the motivation of smokers to quit or cut back. Statistics Canada reported in 2007 that smokers facing smoking restrictions at work or at home were more likely to cut back or consider quitting⁵. Based on this study, it is possible that smokers experiencing a ban on smoking in play areas, may also cut back or quit.

Outdoor smoking restrictions also decrease negative role modeling for children. If children and youth are not exposed to adult smoking behavior, they may be less likely to think of it as normal. Since most smokers start before the age of 18, this is important for public health and cancer prevention.

By passing an outdoor smoke-free bylaw Hamilton will join over fifty municipalities across Ontario who have already passed bylaws governing smoking in outdoor areas. This list includes Collingwood, Woodstock, Barrie, Belleville, Cornwall, Orillia, Peterborough, Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa and Kingston to name only a few on a list that continues to grow.

The question of enforcement is one that many municipalities struggle with when considering an outdoor smoke-free bylaw. Opponents of smoking restrictions have always warned that they will be unenforceable and they have always been wrong. They were wrong about the province-wide smoking bans in workplaces, public indoor spaces and bars and restaurants. There is no evidence to suggest outdoor smoke-free bylaws will pose enforcement problems.

Research has shown that concerns about enforcement are higher in municipalities without outdoor smoke-free bylaws. A 2006 study in Minnesota found that 91 per cent of parks and recreation directors in municipalities without smoke-free recreation policies expressed a high level of concern over enforcement issues, but only 26 per cent of their counterparts in municipalities with smoke-free recreation policies reported any enforcement problems⁶.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Smoking bans: Influence on smoking prevalence, accessed February 9, 2011 <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2006008/article/smoking-tabac/10306-eng.pdf>

⁶ Klein EG, Forster JL, McFadden B, Outley CW. Minnesota tobacco-free policies: attitudes of the general public and park officials. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*



Experience from other jurisdictions in Ontario that have implemented outdoor smoke-free bylaws has shown that these bylaws are predominantly self-enforcing. In advance of this presentation the Canadian Cancer Society contacted the Tobacco Control Area Network for Toronto to inquire if they had received any reported concerns following the implementation of their smoke-free playgrounds bylaw on May 31, 2010. The enforcement for the Toronto bylaw is included as part of the municipal licensing and standards bylaw enforcement officers' work. To date there have been no reports indicating that the bylaw has placed any additional budgetary demands.

In conclusion the Canadian Cancer Society would like to express our support for the implementation of the recommended outdoor smoke-free bylaw. This bylaw will further protect the health of our community by increasing protection against second hand smoke, encouraging smokers to quit or cut back and decreasing negative role modeling for children.

I would like to thank you for your time and consideration to this important issue. Together we can continue to make progress towards a smoke-free Ontario and fight back against the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Ontario.

Thank you!