



**Expanding the City of Ottawa's Smoke-Free By-laws  
Public Consultation Meeting  
100 Constellation Drive, Mustang Room  
Tuesday, January 19, 2016**

Dr. Isra Levy  
Medical Officer of Health  
Ottawa Public Health  
100 Constellation Drive  
Ottawa, ON K2G 6J8

Dear Dr. Levy:

The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) thanks the Ottawa Board of Health and Ottawa Public Health for holding this public consultation meeting on expanding the City of Ottawa's Smoke-Free Bylaws. As this is **National Non-Smoking Week**, it is particularly timely for the OCSH to offer the following comments and recommendations to encourage the city to provide the highest level of protection for Ottawa residents and workers of all ages, especially for individuals with chronic health conditions.

**ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES:**

The OCSH is very concerned about the proliferation of electronic cigarettes for several reasons:

- **Nicotine** is harmful in three human developmental windows: the **fetal brain, the newborn brain, and the developing brain of teens** (particularly the limbic system).<sup>1</sup>
- Based on the extensive scientific evidence about the harms of nicotine, no child should be exposed to any form of nicotine, whether it is from: tobacco products, second-hand smoke, third-hand smoke, electronic cigarettes, or electronic cigarette vapours (first-, second-, and third-hand).
- All contents of electronic cigarettes are potentially hazardous to individuals with asthma. The chemical constituents in electronic cigarettes are irritant triggers for asthmatics. Since perfumes can cause lung irritation and no-scent products are advised for asthmatics, therefore no flavours should be exhaled into the atmosphere, including nicotine containing and/or flavoured vapours.

For example, an OCSH member reported that her son had an asthma attack during a university class because five students were using electronic cigarettes.

- There are **high rates of asthma** in our community:
  - 10% of all Champlain residents have asthma.<sup>2</sup>
  - 1 in 5 Ontario children has asthma, and asthma is the most common chronic childhood illness in North America.<sup>3</sup>
  - 17% of 12- to 19-year-olds in the Champlain region have asthma.<sup>4</sup>
- COPD remains the number one cause of hospitalization in Ottawa and across Canada. Smoking is the number one cause of COPD. We are concerned about smokers who try to quit smoking by using electronic cigarettes, given the lack of scientific evidence proving that electronic cigarettes are an effective smoking cessation device.
- The *Lancet Respiratory Medicine Journal* published just days ago a “new meta-analysis of the entire relevant literature showing that e-cigarettes, as used, are associated with less not more quit.”<sup>5</sup>

#### [OCSH Recommendations Regarding Electronic Cigarettes:](#)

The OCSH strongly urges the City of Ottawa to **prohibit the use of all electronic cigarette products and medical marijuana vaping products inside and outside all public places and workplaces where tobacco smoking is prohibited.** This includes the shops where electronic cigarettes are sold. Allowing vaping in these shops constitutes a workplace health hazard and may also expose young children whose parents frequent such retail establishments.

#### [WATER PIPES:](#)

The OCSH has advocated for bylaws prohibiting the use of water pipes inside and outside all public places and workplaces for several years. In 2012, the OCSH gave a deputation to the Community and Protective Services of Ottawa City Council recommending the use of water pipes be prohibited on **outdoor municipal properties.**<sup>6</sup> In 2014, the OCSH gave a deputation to the Ottawa Board of Health in support of a bylaw prohibiting the use of water pipes **inside all public places and work places.**<sup>7</sup>

This public health issue deserves more attention from the City of Ottawa. Writing to the Province of Ontario in support of a provincial ban is commendable, but Ottawa has always led the way in providing smoke-free public places and work places and should continue to do so. The City of Ottawa can and should follow the examples set by Toronto, Barrie, Peterborough, Orillia, and more than 20 other jurisdictions across Canada.<sup>8</sup> The scientific evidence regarding the harms of water pipe smoking is clear:

- Approximately 14% of Canadian youth between grades 9-12 have tried hookah smoking.<sup>9</sup>
- A recent scientific study in Toronto found that “**Staff and patrons of waterpipe cafes are exposed to air quality levels considered hazardous to human health. Results support eliminating waterpipe smoking in hospitality venues indoors and out.**”<sup>10</sup>
- A 2015 review article on second-hand smoke from water pipes concluded that “**SHS from hookah smoking poses a threat comparable to or even greater than that emanating from cigarette smoking. New policies and legislation should be implemented to protect people from the harmful effects of SHS from waterpipes.**”<sup>11</sup>

#### OCSH Recommendations Regarding Water Pipes:

- Given recent scientific evidence, and since the City of Ottawa banned water pipe smoking on outdoor municipal property in 2012 due to health concerns, it should now **prohibit all tobacco and herbal water pipe smoking, both inside and outside all public places and workplaces** where smoking is prohibited.
- The City of Ottawa should also regulate the visibility and advertising of water pipe paraphernalia, similar to current restrictions on tobacco products.

#### MULTI-UNIT DWELLINGS:

The number one complaint that the OCSH receives is from individuals and families who are trying to be as healthy as possible, but who are involuntarily exposed to the hazards of contaminated air from second-hand smoke from tobacco and other substances. Residents need regulatory support to deal with this pervasive public health issue.

#### OCSH Recommendations Regarding Multi-Unit Dwellings:

The OCSH urges the City of Ottawa to develop a public education campaign in support of future regulation making multi-unit dwellings 100% smoke-free. Individuals living in multi-unit dwellings should be able to lodge complaints about second-hand smoke similar to the noise complaint bylaw.

#### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE EXPANSION OF OTTAWA'S SMOKE-FREE BYLAWS:

The OCSH recommends that the City of Ottawa:

- Follow the example set by the City of Toronto and legalize a 9 meter smoke-free zone for all entranceways to all buildings to which the public has access. The bylaw should also apply to electronic cigarettes.
- Include in the wording of all related bylaws a **ban on all other substances that can be inhaled, vaped, smoked, combusted, or consumed in any way that creates second-hand smoke, vapors, or any type of fumes (e.g. herbal cigarettes)**. The OCSH would be happy to provide wording used in other jurisdictions, if requested.

- Enact the amendments or new bylaws to come into effect on **January 1, 2017**, in time for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations. These new bylaws would have a major health impact and serve as an *Ottawa 2017* legacy project.<sup>12</sup>

We thank the Ottawa Board of Health, Ottawa Public Health, and the City of Ottawa for its ongoing efforts to strengthen tobacco control laws that protect the health of all residents and workers.

**Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in our community.** Novel tobacco and non-tobacco products pose an emerging threat to children, young adults, and individuals who struggle with nicotine addiction. Based on historical tobacco control efforts in Ottawa, we are confident that stricter bylaws will serve as a model for other communities across Canada that are working to prevent youth addiction and help smokers quit and stay smoke-free. Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Carol McDonald

OCSH President

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[www.smokefreeottawa.com](http://www.smokefreeottawa.com)

## REFERENCES

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<sup>2</sup> Libman, B. Champlain Local Health Integration Network. Lung Health in Champlain: An Overview of Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Prevalence and Health System Usage, page 30. August 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Lung Association. Asthma and Children. Retrieved January 17, 2016.

<http://www.on.lung.ca/page.aspx?pid=428>

<sup>4</sup> Libman, B. Champlain Local Health Integration Network. Lung Health in Champlain: An Overview of Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Prevalence and Health System Usage, page 30. August 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Kalkhoran S, Glantz SA. E-cigarettes and smoking cessation in real-world and clinical settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. Published online January 14, 2016. <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600%2815%2900521-4/abstract>

<sup>6</sup> Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health. Prohibiting the Use of Water Pipes and Non-Tobacco Products in the City of Ottawa. Deputation to the Protective Services Committee of Ottawa City Council. June 21, 2012. <http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/waterpipes.html>

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<sup>7</sup> Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health. Deputation on Water pipes to the Ottawa Board of Health. November 17, 2014.

<http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/whats-new/ocshs-deputation-to-the-ottawa-board-of-health-in-support-of-ottawa-public-healths-update-on-the-city-s-smoke-free-strategy>

<sup>8</sup> Non-Smokers' Rights Association. Smoke-Free Laws Database (January 15, 2016 pre-publication version). <https://www.nsra-adnf.ca/cms/smoke-free-laws-database.html>

<sup>9</sup> Minaker LM, Shuh A, Burkhalter RJ, Manske SR. Hookah use prevalence, predictors, and perceptions among Canadian youth: findings from the 2012/2013 Youth Smoking Survey. *Cancer Causes Control*. June 2015; Vol 26, Issue 6; 831–838.

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<sup>10</sup> Zhang B, Haji F, Kaufman P, Muir S, Ferrence R. 'Enter at your own risk': a multimethod study of air quality and biological measures in Canadian waterpipe cafes. *Tobacco Control*. October 25, 2015.

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<sup>11</sup> Kumar SR, Davies S, Weitzman M, Sherman S. A review of air quality, biological indicators and health effects of second-hand waterpipe smoke exposure. *Tobacco Control*. 2015;24:1:i54-i59.

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<sup>12</sup> City of Ottawa. Ottawa 2017. Accessed January 17, 2016. <http://www.ottawa2017.ca/legacy/>