



Ottawa Council on
Smoking or Health

Conseil d'Ottawa sur le
tabagisme ou la santé

May 29, 2015

Honourable Eric Hoskins, MPP (St. Paul's)
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Mr. Pierre Noel
Chair, Board of Directors
Ontario Hospital Association
200 Front Street West, Suite 2800
Toronto, ON M5V 3L1

Mr. Anthony Dale
President and CEO
Ontario Hospital Association
200 Front Street West, Suite 2800
Toronto, ON M5V 3L1

Dear Minister Hoskins, Mr. Noel, and Mr. Dale:

Re: Smoking and Exposure to Second-Hand Smoke on Hospital Campuses

The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) is a local volunteer organization that aims to create a social environment where non-smoking is the norm; to assist in establishing smoke-free environments; to prevent youth from starting to smoke; to encourage smokers to quit; and to advocate for better smoking cessation resources.

We are writing in regards to ongoing complaints that we have received from patients and visitors about:

- Smoking by hospital visitors and staff on outdoor campuses of The Ottawa Hospital.
- Exposure to second-hand smoke at entranceways at the three campuses of The Ottawa Hospital.
- Second-hand smoke drifting into emergency departments due to smoking at entranceways.
- Cigarette butt litter on the hospital campuses.

We congratulate Honourable Dipika Damerla, Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and Ms. France Gélinas, MPP ((Nickel Belt) for all of their hard work on **Bill 45, Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015**. We are very pleased that the Bill 45 passed Third Reading in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on May 26, 2015. However, we are concerned that the new legislation did not include measures to make hospital campuses 100% smoke-free.

On September 3, 2014, the OCSH met with two senior representatives from The Ottawa Hospital. We discussed public complaints about exposure to second-hand smoke at entranceways, including the front entrance of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. The OCSH presented a recent letter of complaint from a member of the public and fact sheets on smoke-free hospital campuses. The hospital representatives emphasized that The Ottawa Hospital is focused on smoking cessation, which makes it more perplexing that it will not remove the designated outdoor smoking areas.

A 100% smoke-free outdoor campus for all Ontario hospitals would:

- Protect patients, visitors, staff, and volunteers from second-hand smoke. **There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke**. “Even occasional and brief exposure to second-hand smoke can cause immediate lung inflammation, acute cardiac events, and damage to blood vessels that can trigger a heart attack, stroke or aneurysm.”¹
- Improve patient safety. Treating hospital patients for their tobacco addiction and managing their nicotine withdrawal symptoms is vital in protecting patient safety and preventing patients from leaving hospital grounds to smoke.^{2,3,4}
- Encourage individuals who are trying to quit and help individuals who have quit to stay smoke-free. Smoke-free workplaces help smokers to quit and stay smoke-free.^{5,6,7}
- Send the message that a 100% smoke-free environment is the only healthy choice and remove any visual cues to individuals who are trying to quit.
- Eliminate cigarette butt pollution and reduce cleaning costs.
- Improve employees’ health and productivity, and reduce employee absenteeism.⁸ Each Canadian employee who smokes costs their employer \$3,396 due to higher absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher insurance premiums.⁹

There is very strong community support for smoke-free entranceways. A survey by Ottawa Public Health found that **84% of Ottawa residents supported smoke-free doorways to public places**.¹⁰

A 100% smoke-free hospital campus should be the gold standard for all Ontario hospitals. Ten Ontario municipalities already have bylaws in place that prohibit smoking on hospital grounds: Elliot Lake, Mattawa, North Bay, Parry Sound, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, Stratford, Thunder Bay, Timmins, and Woodstock.¹¹ Many hospitals themselves are providing leadership in this area, including:

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
(http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/visiting_camh/Pages/Tobacco-Free-CAMH.aspx)
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (<http://www.tbrhsc.net/home/smoke-free/>)
- West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences
(<http://www.wlmh.on.ca/body.cfm?id=315>).
- Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre (<http://sunnybrook.ca/map/>)

To strengthen our case, we enclose photographic evidence of cigarette butt litter at The Ottawa Hospital. A member of the public complained to the OCSH and sent us these photographs in April 2015.

The OCSH urges the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Ontario Hospital Association to support provincial legislation to make all hospital campuses 100% smoke-free. We strongly encourage the province to adopt legislation without delay.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Carol McDonald
Secretary
Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health
Email: info@smokefreeottawa.com
www.smokefreeottawa.com

cc Honourable Dipika Damerla, Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, MPP
(Mississauga East—Cooksville)
Ms. France G  linas, MPP (Nickel Belt)
Ottawa City Councillor Shad Qadri, Chair, Ottawa Board of Health
Mr. James McCracken, Chair, Board of Governors, The Ottawa Hospital
Mr. Lawrence Soloway, Chair, Board of Directors, University of Ottawa Heart Institute
Dr. Jack Kitts, President and CEO, The Ottawa Hospital
Mr. Michael Perley, Director, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco



The Ottawa Hospital, General Campus, April 2015



The Ottawa Hospital, General Campus, April 2015



The Ottawa Hospital, Civic Campus, April 2015

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- ⁸ Health Canada. Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A Guide to Helping Your Employees Quit Smoking. Why Should Employers Be Involved? 2008.
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- ¹⁰ City of Ottawa. Smoke-Free Outdoor Spaces Survey Results. 2011 Ipsos Reid Telephone Survey.
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- ¹¹ Non-Smokers' Rights Association (2015). Smoke-Free Laws Database. (Current to March 30, 2015)
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