



## NEWS RELEASE

### **OCSH Congratulates Ottawa Community Housing on Smoke-Free Policy**

**Ottawa, December 12, 2013** – The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) congratulates Ottawa Community Housing on its plans to introduce a smoke-free policy to protect the 32,000 residents living in social housing in our community.

“This is a giant step forward for tenants' health,” says Carol McDonald, OCSH President. “We have been receiving complaints for years from residents with chronic health conditions, including asthma, COPD, cancer and heart disease. Their health has been severely compromised by second-hand smoke. Until now, they have had no recourse.”

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke<sup>1</sup> and even brief exposures 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.<sup>2</sup> Smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke are the leading cause of disease, disability and death in Ottawa.<sup>3</sup>

“Children and seniors living in social housing need immediate protection from second-hand smoke, as growing lungs, asthmatic lungs and aged lungs are very vulnerable to the toxic chemicals in second-hand smoke,” says Ms. McDonald. “Time is not on their side. They can't afford to wait any longer for a safe place to live.”

A recent survey found that 80% of Ontarians living in multiple-unit dwellings want to live in smoke-free buildings.<sup>4</sup>

“It's time for the City of Ottawa to catch up to communities across Ontario that have smoke-free social housing, including Waterloo, Leeds-Grenville, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Kitchener, and Sudbury,” says Ms. McDonald. “Social housing units in Boston, Maine and California have also implemented smoke-free policies.”

The OCSH is a local volunteer organization that advocates for smoke-free spaces, smoking cessation support and the prevention of youth smoking.

#### **For More Information:**

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## REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *Exposure to Tobacco Smoke Causes Immediate Damage, says New Surgeon General's Report*, News Release, December 9, 2010.

[www.hhs.gov/news/press/2010pres/12/20101209a.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2010pres/12/20101209a.html)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network. *Annual Report 2010-2011*. University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Ottawa, 2011, p. 16.

[www.ccpnetwork.ca/documents/FINALCCPNAR10-11\\_000.pdf](http://www.ccpnetwork.ca/documents/FINALCCPNAR10-11_000.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Smoke-Free Housing Ontario. *Ipsos Reid Survey: 80% of People Living in Apartments, Condos and Co-ops Want to Live Smoke Free*. December 8, 2011.

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/892061/80-of-people-living-in-apartments-condos-and-co-ops-want-to-live-smoke-free>