



## **Second-Hand Tobacco and Marijuana Smoke in Multi-Unit Housing Remains a Public Health Crisis—And It’s About to Get Worse Once Cannabis is Legalized**

Ottawa, January 17, 2018—During **National Non-Smoking Week (January 21-27, 2018)**, the Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) is highlighting the urgent need for the province of Ontario to prohibit all forms of smoking and vaping in multi-unit housing before the federal government legalizes cannabis in July 2018.

“Exposure to second-hand tobacco and cannabis smoke in multi-unit housing is a long-standing public health crisis in the City of Ottawa and across the Province of Ontario,” says Carol McDonald, president of the OCSH. “At least half a million<sup>1,2</sup> Ontario residents are regularly exposed to cancer-causing second-hand smoke in their apartment and condominium units. Air quality in multi-unit housing will significantly deteriorate once cannabis is legalized and people no longer need to hide their marijuana use.”

Anil, a tenant in Ottawa who did not wish to share his last name, recently submitted the following complaint to the OCSH: “My spouse and I spent considerable resources to relocate to a dwelling that is more within our means. Unbeknownst to us the tenant in the house attached to ours smokes in their home. Day and night, our neighbour's second-hand smoke is putting our health and the health of our guests at risk. Our current living situation is taking a toll on our mental and physical health. It's unbelievable that in 2018, knowing what we know about smoking and the detrimental effects it has on our health, that there are no programs in place to prevent this kind of thing from happening.”

Health Canada warns that many of the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke are also found in marijuana smoke,<sup>3</sup> some of which are at even higher concentrations.<sup>4</sup>

“All multi-unit housing should be 100% smoke-free just as indoor and outdoor public places and workplaces in Ontario are 100% smoke-free,” says Ms. McDonald. This is an election year, municipally and provincially. All who run for public office in 2018 have the duty to protect residents in multi-unit housing from getting sick and dying from exposure to second-hand smoke.”

The OCSH has advocated for 100% smoke-free housing for more than 10 years.

Exposure to second-hand tobacco and marijuana smoke remains the number one complaint from the public that the OCSH continues to receive year after year.

The OCSH is a local volunteer group that has advocated for smoke-free environments for 40 years.

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**REFERENCES**

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<sup>2</sup> Program Training and Consultation Centre. Smoke-free Multi-Unit Dwellings—A Priority for Public Health Action. Ontario Health Promotion E-Bulletin, 11 January 2013-OHPE Bulletin 781, Volume 2013, No. 781. <https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=258627>

<sup>3</sup> Health Canada. Consumer Information - Cannabis (Marihuana, marijuana). <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/info/cons-eng.php>

<sup>4</sup> Moir D, Rickert WS, et al. A comparison of mainstream and sidestream marijuana and tobacco cigarette smoke produced under two machine smoking conditions. Chemical Res Toxicol. 2008 Feb;21(2):494-502. Epub 2007 Dec 7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18062674>