



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Cautionary Tale on World No Tobacco Day 2017

Ottawa, May 29, 2017—As the Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) prepares to celebrate World No Tobacco Day on May 31, 2017,¹ it urges the City of Ottawa to expand and harmonize the definition of “smoking” in the smoke-free indoor and outdoor bylaws to prohibit the use of any weeds, herbal products or other substances that can be lit, smoked, burned, heated, or vapourized, including marijuana, electronic cigarettes, and the new heat-not burn products created by the tobacco industry. In 396 days, marijuana will be legal. The City of Ottawa needs to act now.

“World No Tobacco Day reminds us that the public, workers, and especially youth need greater protection from predatory promotional tactics, particularly those of the tobacco industry,” says Carol McDonald, OCSH president. “The City of Ottawa adopted the smoke-free indoor bylaws 16 years ago. Over 100 municipalities across Canada have already updated the legal language in their smoke-free bylaws to include emerging tobacco and non-tobacco products that emit harmful second-hand smoke, vapour and gases.”² Ottawa, once a leader in regulating smoke-free spaces, is now lagging sorely behind the rest of Canada.

The OCSH urges the City of Ottawa to update the smoke-free indoor and outdoor bylaws before the federal government legalizes marijuana in 2018. Health Canada says that second-hand marijuana smoke contains many of the same chemicals as second-hand tobacco smoke.³

“We’re concerned that just as many youth use marijuana as smoke cigarettes,⁴ that students are vaping marijuana juice and crushed oxycontin on school property,⁵ and that new scientific data⁶ links marijuana use to cardiovascular disease,” says Ms. McDonald.

To protect the health of its citizens, the City of Ottawa must also prohibit vaping inside and outside all public places and workplaces as the provincial government did not proclaim all of the regulations under the *Electronic Cigarette Act* that received Royal Assent more than one year ago. The Province of Ontario was supposed to prohibit vaping in public places and workplaces as of January 1, 2016 but action has stalled.

On June 19, 2017, the OCSH will ask the Ottawa Board of Health to start the legal process to strengthen the city's smoke-free bylaws. The OCSH has already recommended⁷ that the Board of Health update the smoke-free indoor and outdoor bylaws; expand and harmonize the definition of "smoking" in all smoke-free bylaws; prohibit marijuana and vaping lounges; limit the location and number of marijuana and electronic cigarette vendors near schools, beaches, playgrounds, and sports fields; and protect residents in multi-unit dwellings from second-hand tobacco and marijuana smoke, as well as second-hand vapour from electronic cigarettes.

The OCSH is a volunteer organization that was established in 1978. Our goals are 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.

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REFERENCES

¹ World Health Organization. WHO Global Health Days. World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2017. <http://www.who.int/campaigns/no-tobacco-day/2017/event/en/>

² Non-Smokers' Rights Association/Smoking and Health Action Foundation, NSRA's Smoke-Free Laws Database, current to March 31, 2017. <http://database.nonsmokersrights.ca/>

³ Health Canada. Consumer Information—Cannabis (Marihuana, marijuana). Accessed May 29, 2017. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/info/cons-eng.php>

⁴ Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, University of Waterloo. Just as many teenagers use cannabis as smoke cigarettes. May 8, 2017. <https://uwaterloo.ca/propel/news/just-many-teenagers-use-cannabis-smoke-cigarettes>

⁵ Jennifer Hamilton-McCharles, "Do you know what your kids are vaping?" The Nugget. May 23, 2017. <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2017/05/23/do-you-know-what-your-kids-are-vaping>

⁶ Beeson L. University of California. News & Media. One Minute of Second-Hand Marijuana Smoke Impairs Cardiovascular Function. Effects Are Like Tobacco's, But Last Three Times Longer. July 27, 2016. <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2016/07/403721/one-minute-second-hand-marijuana-smoke-impairs-cardiovascular-function>

⁷ Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health. OCSH Letter to the Ottawa Board of Health re: Marijuana Electronic Cigarettes, and Heat-Not-Burn Products. January 16, 2017. <http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/whats-new/january-16th-2017>