

## SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

Tobacco use is the number one cause of premature disease and death in Ontario, responsible for 16,000 deaths each year. In addition to the human toll, tobacco has a financial impact. Every year, the cost to Ontarians is \$1.7 billion for health care and \$2.6 billion in lost productivity.

### The Smoke-Free Ontario Campaign

The McGuinty government is committing an unprecedented \$50 million in 2005/06 to support the Smoke Free Ontario Campaign — one of the most comprehensive tobacco protection, prevention and cessation strategies in North America. This will mean more funding for public health units, community-based youth prevention programs, public education, cessation programs, research and evaluation, as well as initiatives targeted at high risk populations such as Aboriginal communities and low-income earners.

The \$50 million is the biggest anti-smoking investment in the province's history. It will be used to support the three main goals of the Smoke-Free Ontario Campaign: protection, prevention and cessation:

- Youth Prevention Programs (\$5.6M): Funding for community and school-based prevention programs.
- Cessation (\$13.8M): Funding for new programs targeting high-risk populations and the expansion of existing tobacco initiatives, including the Ontario Medical Association, Ontario Pharmacists' Association and Ontario Dentists' Association's program to train health professionals on cessation; the "Leave the Pack Behind" program to educate post-secondary students about the hazards of smoking; and Smokers' Helpline. This winter, the government will launch a major cessation initiative including improved access to nicotine-replacement therapies.
- Aboriginal Programs (\$2M): Funding for prevention, education, cessation, and tobacco control resources in Aboriginal communities.
- Evaluation, Surveillance and Administration (\$4.6M).
- Provincial Support Programs (\$2.7M): Funding for support, training and technical assistance for tobacco control staff and resources for health care organizations, communities and the public.
- Public Health Units (\$7.7M): Funding to increase the resources of public health units for health protection and enforcement.
- Public Education (\$13.6M): Funding to increase public awareness of and support for protection, prevention and cessation through mass media and programs targeting high-risk communities.

### The Smoke-Free Ontario Act

The McGuinty government has also introduced the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that will, if passed,

prohibit smoking in all enclosed workplaces, protecting all workers regardless of where they are employed, and will prohibit smoking in all enclosed public places that are not primarily a place of residence as of May 31, 2006. This would include restaurants, bars, schools, private clubs, sports arenas, entertainment venues, work vehicles and offices.

The proposed Act would also limit the sale, distribution and use of tobacco products, including stricter measures to ensure that minors cannot buy cigarettes and a ban on the display of cigarettes in all retail outlets by 2008.

The proposed legislation, like the current Tobacco Control Act, respects the use of sacred tobacco for traditional cultural or spiritual purposes.

### **Protecting Young People**

In addition to the proposed legislation, the government has taken a number of steps to prevent young people from smoking, including:

- Launching an innovative multi-media campaign – developed by kids for kids – to prevent smoking among young people. The *stupid.ca* campaign features an interactive website that has received more than 500,000 new visitors since October 2004 and has won several national and international awards for education and advertising.
- Raising tobacco taxes by \$6.25 a carton since November 2003.

### **Support for the Smoke-Free Ontario Campaign**

“We congratulate the government on moving forward with a Smoke-Free Ontario. The combination of tough legislation, education and cessation will help reduce the smoking-related risk of cancer for both adults and children. The increased financial support of Smokers’ Helpline has enabled us to offer the service to more individuals who would like to know more about quitting smoking.”

*Peter Goodhand, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division.*

“The Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco applauds Minister Smitherman, the Premier and their colleagues for leveling the playing field so that workers and members of the public in all parts of Ontario can enjoy indoor workplaces and recreational environments entirely free of the toxic effects of second-hand tobacco smoke. No one anywhere in the province should have to risk becoming ill or die from second-hand smoke exposure in order to hold a job or socialize with friends and family. Now, they won't have to.”

*Michael Perley, Director, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco*

“On behalf of The Lung Association, we are delighted to see this commitment to the youth tobacco control initiatives by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Over the years we have been a leader in tobacco prevention among youth and will now be able to reach even more young people through our Youth Advocacy Training Institute.”

*Manu Malkani, President and CEO, the Ontario Lung Association.*