

Smoking ban approved for Edmonton restaurants • University of Alberta rejects tobacco sponsorship • Smoke-free bylaw approved in Fort McMurray • Tobacco boss denies industry is targeting youth • Christmas Seal donors urged to get behind Gary Mar • New tobacco legislation in Newfoundland • Lung cancer and heart disease plummet in California • Maclean's reports "Alberta Paradox" • ASH offers money-back guarantee to insurance applicants

ash.ca is a bimonthly newsletter of **Action on Smoking & Health**. ASH is Western Canada's leading health organization devoted to tobacco control and prevention. If you would like to become a member or need more information please visit our website **www.ash.ca** or contact our office at the address below.

➤ **University of Alberta rejects tobacco sponsorship**

The University of Alberta has rejected a \$500,000 scholarship from a "major Canadian tobacco company" following the public release of the proposed donation. University officials quietly approached the student's union council in an attempt to obtain student support for the donation. However the plan backfired after the details of the meeting were published in the university newspaper, *The Gateway*.

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➤ **Smoking ban approved for Edmonton restaurants**

Calgary poised to follow suit

On December 19, Edmonton City Council voted 7-4 in favour of a complete smoking ban in local restaurants effective May 1, 2001. The decision followed a successful 12-month campaign led by Capital Health, ASH, and the Alberta Lung Association to secure further smoking restrictions in Edmonton. City Councillor Allan Bolstad, a dedicated and long-standing supporter of tobacco reduction, successfully championed the smoking bylaw.

The smoking bylaw drew more response at City Hall than any other issue in the Edmonton's history with over 9,000 phone calls logged since May. The calls were 75% in favour of further smoking restrictions. The smoking bylaw was rated as the top civic issue in 2000 by the Edmonton Sun.

"This bylaw is a major victory for public health in Edmonton and it demonstrates our city's leadership on this important health issue" said Councillor Allan Bolstad.

"Residents should not be forced to breathe secondhand smoke against their will and we have taken a major step in the right direction" he added. "This bylaw will show the world that Edmonton cares about the health of its residents during the upcoming 2001 World Championship in Athletics".

Edmonton was the first Alberta municipality to pass a smoking bylaw over 20 years ago, and it was one of the first bylaws of its kind in Canada. Since 1980, at least 65 Alberta communities have adopted smoking bylaws. The new bylaw is the toughest in the province and includes a smoking ban in outdoor restaurant patios.

Meanwhile, Calgary Mayor Al Duerr and local health groups are calling for a similar bylaw to restrict smoking in that city's restaurants. Calgary City Council is expected to consider the issue in early 2001 following extensive public consultations.

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In a letter to university officials, ASH urged the institution to serve as a healthy role model in the community by rejecting any form of tobacco sponsorship. ASH emphasized that the tobacco companies have a long track record of exploiting the credibility of respected organizations to help promote their deadly products.

The ASH letter stated "There is no doubt that the tobacco industry will use this sponsorship to help build credibility and respect among a key target group-university students and adolescents preparing for university. In other words, they will use this relationship to help sustain and promote tobacco sales among young people". ASH encouraged the university to reject funding from any industry whose products kill when used exactly as intended and result in over 45,000 premature deaths annually in Canada.

The university's board of governors nixed the proposed sponsorship after a closed-door session held in early November. The Edmonton Journal supported the move in a follow-up editorial, calling the university's decision "very wise".

➤ **Smoke-free bylaw approved in Fort McMurray**

Toughest workplace restrictions in Alberta

Residents of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (encompassing the City of Fort McMurray) can breathe a little easier as the result of a tough new smoking bylaw that was approved on November 28. The bylaw will ban smoking in most workplaces with the exception of liquor and gaming establishments. Employers have the option of setting up separate smoking

rooms that are vented directly outside. The restaurant smoking ban will be phased-in over a four-year period with smoking restricted to adult-only establishments by 2004.

The Northern Lights Tobacco Reduction Coalition and the regional health authority led the bylaw campaign. "Our coalition deserves full marks for its persistence in securing this bylaw" said Yvonne Gazzard

of the Northern Lights Regional Health Authority. "We extend our sincere gratitude to all of the organizations and individuals who helped to make this bylaw a reality" she added.

Smoking rates in the Wood Buffalo region are the highest in Alberta at 39%. The new smoking bylaw will undoubtedly help to correct this problem.

➤ **Tobacco boss denies industry is targeting youth**

In a recent presentation to the Edmonton Downtown Rotary Club, the president of the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council denied that the Council's member companies have participated in deliberate efforts to recruit adolescents. Rob Parker's denial sharply contradicts dozens of internal tobacco industry documents revealing that Canadian tobacco companies have actively engaged in deliberate youth marketing schemes.

Dr. Roger Hodkinson, ASH Honorary Chairman, told Parker "You would have us believe that the tobacco industry has changed its spots but your actions reveal the exact opposite. While you are here glossing over the appalling track record of your members, these companies continue to actively engage in youth marketing activities as we speak."

Hodkinson asked "Mr. Parker, will you admit what internal tobacco industry

documents have already revealed: That your members have actively engaged in efforts to recruit adolescents?". Parker replied "No they have not."

Hodkinson then held up a recent Player's advertisement displaying a youthful male figure whose age is indeterminate. "Could someone please tell me how this Player's ad would not be appealing to adolescents?" Hodkinson asked the audience.

➤ Christmas Seal donors urged to get behind Gary Mar

The Alberta Lung Association is urging its 50,000 Christmas Seal donors to support Alberta Health and Wellness Minister Gary Mar in his efforts to implement an evidence-based tobacco reduction strategy. The Lung Association is distributing a flyer to its donors stating "Help Gary Mar reduce tobacco use in Alberta". The flyer urges donors to register their support for Mr. Mar's plan and to encourage their MLA to do the same.

The flyer reveals Alberta's poor track record on tobacco, noting that Alberta has the highest smoking rate of any province west of Quebec, the lowest tobacco taxes in western Canada, very few province wide smoking restrictions, and no legislation to restrict tobacco marketing and sales. "Alberta is at the back of the pack on tobacco" the flyer confirms.

The Alberta Lung Association hopes that the campaign will provide Mr. Mar and the Alberta government with further incentive to act appropriately. Gary Mar is the Honorary President and Patron of the Alberta Lung Association.

➤ New tobacco legislation in Newfoundland

The Newfoundland government passed two new tobacco bills in December that ban smoking in all public places accessible to children and outlaw tobacco sales in pharmacies. Health Minister Roger Grimes introduced the bills in the House of Assembly in early December and they were approved before the Christmas break. A third bill was that allows the

government to recover tobacco-related health care costs was tabled in the House.

The smoking ban applies to restaurants and other establishments accessible to children and will take effect on January 1, 2002. Newfoundland now becomes the first province to ban smoking in restaurants since a similar B.C. ban was struck down in court due to a process

technicality. Five provinces have now outlawed tobacco sales in pharmacies including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland.

The passage of the two bills was the culmination of an 18-month campaign initiated by Newfoundland's Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT).

➤ Lung cancer and heart disease plummet in California

California's renowned tobacco reduction strategy appears to be paying off in spades with the release of new data showing that lung cancer and heart disease rates have dropped significantly since the program was initiated in 1988.

Two studies published in the New England Journal of Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association identified 13-14% reductions in heart disease and lung cancer among Californians when compared to U.S. national averages. These reductions correspond with a 21% reduction in tobacco consumption or the equivalent of 2.9 billion fewer packs of cigarettes between 1989 and 1997.

"Our results show that large-scale, aggressive tobacco control programs save lives," said Stanton Glantz, PhD, professor of medicine at the University of California San Francisco. "They also show that there is a real human price to be paid when the tobacco industry succeeds in convincing politicians to cut back and water down these programs."

California's population is slightly larger than Canada's with about 32 million residents.

➤ Maclean's reports "Alberta Paradox"

Increased wealth usually means better health -- except in Alberta, according to a recent Maclean's magazine report on health care in Canada. The report suggested that higher rates of smoking could be offsetting the positive health benefits of higher income levels among Albertans. Maclean's referred to this effect as the "Alberta Paradox".

It has been well established that populations with higher rates of income enjoy better overall health. However other health determinants, including lifestyle factors such as smoking, can negate this effect.

According to the latest data from Health Canada, Alberta has the highest smoking rate of any province west of Quebec. Over the past two years, Alberta's adult smoking rate has risen above the national average -- a particularly disturbing trend. Twenty-six percent of Albertans aged 15 years and over are current smokers compared with 25% of Canadians.

➤ ASH offers money-back guarantee to insurance applicants

ASH Group Insurance is the only program of its kind in Canada to offer nonsmokers lower rates on their home and auto insurance premiums. Since its launch in 1998, the program has provided hundreds of ASH members with significant savings on their personal insurance. ASH is now offering a money-back guarantee to all applicants.

"We are so confident that nonsmokers will save money that we will gladly reimburse our membership fee if you don't save at least as much on your annual insurance premium" said Christiaan Velthoen, ASH president. "We encourage any nonsmoker who wants to save money to obtain a free quote on this novel insurance program. We believe that nonsmokers should be rewarded for maintaining a safer, low-risk lifestyle."

Numerous studies around the world have concluded that smokers have 50% more traffic collisions than nonsmokers. Careless smoking is also a major cause of property fires.

To qualify for the insurance, you must be a nonsmoker with a good driving record and you must become an ASH member (only \$25/year). For a free quote, please call our insurance partner, Willis Canada at 1-800-272-5688. ASH Group Insurance is underwritten by Allianz Canada.

➤ Help ASH build a smoke-free future. Your contribution is welcome.

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Thank you for your support!

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