



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Change is in the Air! Over 100 Ontario Social Housing Providers Going Smoke-Free

Ottawa—May 29, 2014

In celebration of World No Tobacco Day on May 31st, 2014, the Non-Smokers' Rights Association would like to recognize and commend the 102 social housing providers from across the province that have adopted no-smoking policies. Among the group is Ottawa Community Housing, whose policy goes into effect this Saturday. Such policies prohibit smoking in the private units of multi-unit housing, protecting some of Ontario's most vulnerable tenants.

Approximately 30% of Ontarians live in multi-unit housing, including rental apartments and condominiums, and approximately one-third of them report regular exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) which infiltrates their homes from neighbouring units. For many people this is a nuisance; however, for individuals with pre-existing health conditions made worse by exposure, it's a major threat to their health and well-being. The vast majority of Ontarians do not smoke (84%), and 80% of adults currently living in an apartment or condominium would choose smoke-free if such a choice existed.

No-smoking policies:

- Are legal, enforceable & non-discriminatory;
- Protect tenants from exposure to SHS, which has no known safe level of exposure;
- Do not prohibit people who smoke from renting accommodations, nor do they force tenants to quit smoking;
- Save scarce tax dollars with reduced costs for cleaning, painting and maintenance; and
- Reduce the risk of fire, which in turn further reduces insurance costs.

According to the Ontario Fire Marshal, cigarettes remain the #1 ignition source in fatal residential fires. The Housing Services Corporation (HSC) reported that in 2013, 21% of the fires at properties insured through its group insurance program were caused by smoking, with damages at \$2 million. HSC's insurance program now factors no-smoking policies in its premium allocations.

Recent tenant surveys undertaken by two social housing providers revealed very high support for no-smoking policies. Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation, which opened "Beaver Barracks" in 2010 as a 100% smoke-free development, registered an impressive 98% level of support among tenants living there. The Region of Waterloo, which also implemented a no-smoking policy in 2010, found the majority of its tenants support its policy—79% overall.



Smoke-Free Housing Ontario was created by the Non-Smokers' Rights Association/Smoking and Health Action Foundation and is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Non-Smokers' Rights Association is a non-profit health organization that has worked exclusively in the field of tobacco control for 40 years. Our mission is to promote public health by eliminating illness and death caused by tobacco, including second-hand smoke.

List of social housing providers with no-smoking policies:

http://www.smokefreehousingon.ca/hsfo/file/files/Community_Housing_May_29_2014.pdf

For more information on smoke-free housing in Ontario: www.smokefreehousingon.ca

For further information:

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