

## **SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, as of May 31, 2006**

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### **Protecting Ontarians – Legislation Will Make All Enclosed Workplace and Public Places in Ontario Smoke-Free**

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This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

Smoking will be prohibited in all enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places in Ontario as of May 31, 2006 under new tobacco control legislation, which received third and final reading on June 8, 2005 and Royal Assent on June 13, 2005.

“The Premier has made Smoke-Free Ontario my number one priority and I am both proud and pleased to be leading the charge on this legislation,” says Health Promotion Minister, Jim Watson. “This legislation will bring about a level playing field that municipalities and businesses were asking for with regard to tobacco legislation. It will provide safer work environments and it will prevent young people from starting to smoke.”

“This is a strong and fair direction for the province and pays tribute to the efforts of so many who have worked to bring about a smoke free Ontario. This legislation also makes us a leader in North America in tobacco control work.”

“It was an honour for me to stand in the Legislature on October 17, 2005 to announce my advisory committee -- the Smoke-Free Ontario Campaign Committee. Made up of leaders and community advocates from across the province, it is the role of this body to provide advice and direction as we lead up to May 31, 2006.”

This law will be known as the Smoke-Free Ontario Act when it comes into effect. It will:

- ban smoking in enclosed public places and all enclosed workplaces as of May 31, 2006, including restaurants, bars, schools, private clubs, sports arenas, entertainment venues, work vehicles and offices;
- toughen laws on tobacco sales to minors; and
- restrict the promotion of tobacco products by May 31, 2006, with a complete ban on the display of tobacco products by May 31, 2008.

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario, killing 16,000 Ontarians every year. In addition to the human toll, there is an economic toll. Tobacco-related diseases cost the Ontario economy at least \$1.7 billion for health care annually, result in more than \$2.6 billion in productivity losses and account for at least 500,000 hospital days each year.

The Act does not extend the smoking ban to private dwellings, with the exception of licensed, private home day care. Operators of residential care facilities will have the option of allowing controlled smoking areas in these facilities.

“The legislation will protect workers and the public from unwanted exposure to second-hand smoke and it will help to ensure that young people don’t pick up this deadly addiction,” says Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The Act is part of the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario. The plan includes keeping Ontarians healthier, reducing wait times for key procedures, creating Family Health Teams, and increasing access to doctors and nurses.

More information is available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>.

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