

campaign for a **smoke-free** alberta

- NEWS RELEASE -

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Alberta passes one of the strongest tobacco control laws in Canada

Edmonton - Today the Legislative Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of Bill 45—the Tobacco Reduction Act. The bill represents one of the strongest tobacco control laws in Canada. Only three other provinces—Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia—have passed similar legislation in recent years.

The Tobacco Reduction Act will stop tobacco companies from targeting youth in retail stores, will protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke in almost all workplaces, and it will require pharmacies to honour their code of ethics by ending tobacco sales in drug stores. Tobacco sales bans will also apply to all healthcare facilities and post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

Beginning on January 1, Albertans can expect to see almost all workplaces and public establishments become completely smoke-free. The bans on tobacco displays and tobacco sales are expected to take effect later next year.

“The passage of the Tobacco Reduction Act says that the provincial government is serious about the health of Albertans” said Angeline Webb, Cancer Control Analyst with the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division. “We commend health minister Dave Hancock for providing the required leadership on Bill 45 and we applaud Premier Ed Stelmach for making disease prevention a government mandate. This legislation represents one of the most significant measures the government could take to enhance the quality of life of Albertans.”

“This legislation will improve indoor air quality by making almost all workplaces and public establishments completely smoke-free” said Tony Hudson, President of the Lung Association of Alberta. “We predict that the Tobacco Reduction Act will encourage thousands of Albertans to quit smoking and will prevent thousands more young people from starting. The Act is also expected to reduce the burden on Alberta’s healthcare system resulting from illnesses caused by tobacco use.”

“Alberta’s youth will be the greatest beneficiaries of the Tobacco Reduction Act” said Diana Krescy, CEO, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, NWT and Nunavut. “This legislation will create a healthy legacy for future generations by protecting youth from predatory marketing strategies and by establishing a strong policy framework that can be further enhanced”.

The coalition also predicts that the Alberta economy will benefit from the new health legislation since tobacco places a \$1.3 billion annual burden on employers. All scientifically sound studies show that smoke-free workplace laws have no long-term negative economic impacts on bars, restaurants, hotels or gaming establishments.

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Tobacco use kills an estimated 3,000 Albertans each year and is responsible for 30 percent of cancer deaths, one-third of heart disease deaths and over 80 percent of lung disease mortality.

The Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta is a coalition of 14 prominent Alberta organizations who support effective measures to reduce and prevent tobacco use.

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Contact:

Les Hagen, Action on Smoking & Health @ 780-919-5546

Angeline Webb, Canadian Cancer Society--Alberta/NWT @ 403-968-8614

Tony Hudson, Lung Association of Alberta/NWT @ 780-488-6995

Patricia Hannah, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, NWT and Nunavut @ 403.880.3553