



## PREVENT CANCER THROUGH HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY

### Key Facts

- Tobacco is a major health issue that needs the attention of political leaders.
- Almost 70 BC communities and three-quarters of BC's population are sheltered from tobacco modelling and exposure in outdoor public places. More than one million British Columbians remain unprotected.
- The Union of BC Municipalities supports smoke-free outdoor public places.

### Rationale for outdoor smoke and vape-free policy

#### Protection from second-hand smoke

Secondhand smoke is extremely toxic. Studies of particulate matter have shown that in an outdoor setting, second-hand smoke can be as concentrated as in an indoor setting. Children experience greater impacts from second-hand smoke due to their developing immune and respiratory systems. Every year, more than 800 Canadians who don't smoke die from second-hand smoke exposure.

#### Increase motivation to quit smoking

People who smoke tend to respond to restrictions by cutting back or quitting. The majority (85.7%) of British Columbians do not smoke. Of the minority who do smoke, two-thirds want to quit and are looking for tools to help them. Several studies have shown that when smoking bans have been implemented, people have chosen to quit or cut back and that smoke-free patio regulations may help former smokers avoid relapse.

#### Equitable access to clean air for all British Columbians

To date, 68 communities in BC are sheltered by tobacco bylaws with stronger protections than BC's *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act*. Approximately three quarters of these communities fall within the Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island. Outside of these boundaries, more than 1 million British Columbians in 125 communities, many of which are rural and remote, remain unprotected from tobacco related exposure and role-modelling.

#### Recommended bylaws prohibit smoking and vaping:

- on restaurant and bar patios
- on city-managed properties: parks, playgrounds, trails, plazas, beaches, playing fields, recreation facilities and venues
- within a buffer zone of 7.5 metres of the above mentioned, as well as the doors, windows and air intakes of public buildings



## Positive role modelling

Tobacco use is started and established primarily during adolescence. Since most smokers start before the age of 18, it is important to model healthy behaviours. Youth who do not see adults smoking or vaping will be less likely to view these as normal social behaviors and, thereby, are less likely to start themselves.

## Consistency can improve compliance

With universal provincial policy and broad awareness measures, BC residents and tourists will be more aware of smoking restrictions. Research tells us that when people understand what tobacco restrictions are in place and why they have been implemented, they are more likely to comply, and are also more likely to speak up, encouraging others to comply. Evaluations have found that the fear of compliance issues exceed the actual number of compliance issues that occur.

## Canadian precedent

The majority of Canadian provinces and territories ban smoking on bar and restaurant patios and a growing number have recently expanded restrictions to other public outdoor places. Ontario, for example, banned smoking on restaurant/bar patios, playgrounds and sports fields, effective January 1, 2015. Smoking behaviour and exposure to secondhand smoke decreased within the first year of implementation at all affected venues, and compliance was perceived to be moderate to high with variations observed by the type of outdoor venue.

## Public Support

A 2013 Angus Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society revealed the following support for smoke-free places policy by British Columbians:

- **Bar and restaurant patios:** 66% of adults and 79% of youth
- **Children's playgrounds:** 91% of adults and 96% of youth
- **Parks and beaches:** 66% of adults and 80% of youth

Preventable risk factors such as **tobacco use and exposure**  
cost **\$2 billion** per year in BC.

