

# From Our Member Agencies

## Illegal Sales to Minors

Province-wide compliance checks recently carried out by the Council for a Tobacco-Free Manitoba (CTFM) indicate that minors continue to purchase cigarettes easily through retail outlets. Approximately 33% of the stores visited have sold tobacco products to minors.

CTFM is calling on the Manitoba government to strengthen and enforce its *Act to Protect the Health of Non-Smokers*, particularly as it applies to minors. "The current wording of the provincial legislation makes it too easy for a retailer to avoid prosecution if caught selling to a minor," said Dr. Errol Billinkoff, CTFM spokesperson, at a news conference held during National Non-Smoking Week to announce the compliance check findings. "The act simply says that no retailer shall knowingly sell to a minor, making it easy for a retailer to plead ignorance. Retailers also should be required by law to ask for photo identification."

CTFM is currently coordinating an awareness campaign targeting the public to lobby Members of the Legislative Assembly to legislate changes that will make it more difficult for children to buy cigarettes.

*Council for a Tobacco-Free Manitoba*

## Advocacy Activities in Ontario

The Council for a Tobacco-Free Ontario, along with support from its local councils, was quick to plunge into an intensive letter and phone campaign to federal and provincial legislators about the federal government's then proposed tax rollback on tobacco.

The hearings of the Standing Committee on Social Development, examining Bill 119, the *Tobacco Control Act*, were held during three weeks in February at Queen's Park. The Committee travelled to London, Sudbury and Thunder Bay to hear presentations. Local councils from across Ontario made a superb effort in presenting their concerns to members of Parliament. For example, in the London hearings, nearest to tobacco belt, the councils in the region made a joint presentation, along with individual councils from Lambton and Windsor-Essex.

The proposed legislation is designed to raise the age of purchase to age 19, remove the sale of tobacco from health care facilities (including pharmacies), prohibit smoking in schools, day nurseries, retail establishments and transit shelters, and increase the fines for offenses. Final clause-by-clause legislation will be reported for Third reading sometime during the spring session.

*Council for a Tobacco-Free Ontario*

## Another Successful Smoke-free Pub

The Third Annual Smoke-free Pub Day was held in Nova Scotia on Weedless Wednesday, January 19, 1994. Your Father's Moustache, one of the most popular pub/cafeterias in the Halifax metropolitan area, hosted the event.

In the wake of the passing of Bill 62, the *Access to Tobacco and Tobacco Products by Minors Act*, and promised provincial second-hand smoke legislation, this event was timely. It provided Smoke-Free Nova Scotia (SFNS) and its member agencies the opportunity to get the message out about the dangers of environmental tobacco smoke.

The event was heavily promoted by two local radio stations and as a result was well attended. Even the Minister of Health, Dr. Ron Siewart, dropped by (twice!). Patrons were treated to selections from the Heart Smart Cookbook and were entertained with maritime music performed by a Celtic-flavoured duo who kept the place jumping until the wee hours of the morning.

SFNS has been urged to make this more than an annual event, so the Council is preparing for another smoke-free day on World No-Tobacco Day on May 31. They are hoping to go province-wide with their smoke-free pub days and encourage all businesses to try a smoke-free life.

*Smoke-Free Nova Scotia*

## Making Use of Technology

The Newfoundland Council on Smoking and Health found an innovative way to spread valuable information related to tobacco control across the eastern province. The Council coordinated a province-wide one hour long teleconference during National Non-Smoking Week which brought together hundreds of people working in the area of tobacco control. The teleconference was fed into sites across the province including hospitals, government agencies and schools and its set-up allowed for many persons at one site to listen in. The teleconference presented information on legislation and enforcement; education initiatives in schools and communities; smoking cessation programs and adolescent counselling programs, and let people know how they could access the information by providing contacts and sources. The teleconference was such a great success that plans are underway to make it an annual event.

In addition to this teleconference, Council members also gave two other province-wide teleconferences during National Non-Smoking Week. The first was for pediatricians and the second for occupational health nurses. Although these had much smaller audiences, they generated great interest in dealing with children's health issues and new provincial sales to minors and public places/workplace legislation.

For tips on how to coordinate a similar project in your community or province contact Claudette Boyd at (709) 754-0220.

*Newfoundland Council on Smoking and Health*