

November 29, 2010

Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier  
Legislative Bldg., Room 281  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Re: Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group Report "Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now: Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy for 2011-2016"

On behalf of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health, I would like to express our strong support for the recently released provincial Tobacco Strategy Advisory Committee (TSAG) report "Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now: Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy for 2011 – 2016".

The recommendations identified in this report are based on tobacco control evidence reviewed by leading tobacco control experts on the Scientific Advisory Group who wrote the "Evidence to Guide Action: Comprehensive Tobacco Control in Ontario" document.

The TSAG report outlines a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that incorporates a whole government approach and equity considerations to address both supply and demand for all tobacco products.

Ontario has made some very important gains in tobacco control, most notably the passing of the Smoke Free Ontario Act. However, tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario and it is imperative that we move into the next phase of effective tobacco control strategies to end this epidemic that kills the equivalent of the population of the town of Gravenhurst each and every year.

In Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka the smoking rates are above the provincial average. The 2007/2008 Canadian Community Health survey indicates the current smoking status for 12 years of age and older is 23.3 per cent in Simcoe Muskoka versus 20.3 per cent in Ontario. In our communities we witness on a daily basis the presence of contraband and the use of new and emerging tobacco products such as flavoured chew tobacco. A survey conducted this past year by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit identified that there are insufficient cessation supports in our area as well.

It is critically important that a renewal of the Smoke Free Ontario strategy occurs, to continue to build on the progress that has been made. We express to you our endorsement of this excellent report and the recommendations retained in it and urge the

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Ontario Government to take action on the recommendations in order to effect positive change in the health of our communities.

Sincerely,

**Original signed by**

Dennis Roughley  
Chair, Board of Health

DR:JF:mk

- c. Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion and Sport
- Julia Munroe, MPP York Simcoe
- Garfield Dunlop, MPP Simcoe North
- Aileen Carroll, MPP Barrie
- Norm Miller, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka
- Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe Grey
- Linda Stewart, Executive Director, aPHa
- Ms. Connie Uetrecht, Executive Director OPHA
- Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Mr. Michael Perley, Director, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
- Ontario Boards of Health
- North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN
- Central LHIN