

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Smoke-Free Policies for Subsidized Housing Established in Peterborough and Millbrook

Wednesday, April 14, 2010, Peterborough

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit announced today that three new smoke-free policies in subsidized housing units are now in effect thanks to the leadership of local social housing providers.

Millbrook Non-Profit Housing of Millbrook, St. Giles Senior Citizens Residence of Peterborough and Maryland Place of Peterborough have each created policies to ensure their buildings are completely smoke-free.

"This is an important achievement because it marks the first time smoke-free policies have been implemented in public housing in our area and serves as wonderful testimony to what can be accomplished when residents band together to protect their right to clean air," said Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health of the Health Unit. "As we have heard recently in the media, smoke-free policies also lead to long-term public health benefits such as lower hospitalization rates."

According to Health Canada, there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke so the Health Unit is encouraging landlords of low- and moderate-income residences to implement similar policies to protect the health of their tenants and provide them with an opportunity to live in smoke-free housing.

No construction or mechanical fix can keep smoke from moving from one unit to another. Until smoke-free policies exist, anyone living in a social housing unit cannot be guaranteed a smoke-free home. The option to move is extremely limited for these residents.

These policies stipulate that all new leases signed by residents will include a provision that no smoking will be allowed inside their units or in common areas. Units currently occupied by smokers will transition to becoming smoke-free over time as these residents move out. The Health Unit is offering cessation services to current smokers in the meantime.

"Notwithstanding the 'grandfathering' of current smokers, the leadership from these three organizations is a very important victory and has already encouraged other housing units to also adopt smoke-free policies," said Dr. Pellizzari.

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information about smoke-free housing, please visit
<http://www.smokefreehousing.ca/index.html> .

-30-

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