

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smoking Still a Pervasive Local Health Issue According to 2009 Tobacco Use Report

New Health Unit Report Identifies Concerns and Hopeful Trends

Thursday, June 11, 2009, Peterborough

An estimated 286 people die every year in the local region due to tobacco use according to a new report released today by the Peterborough County-City Health Unit (PCCHU).

"This report shows that while local comprehensive tobacco control efforts have benefitted the Peterborough region, tobacco use is still a key area of concern for the public health of our community," said Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health. "It is particularly worrisome to see the smoking rates of our local youth and prenatal women above the provincial average."

The Peterborough County and City 2009 Tobacco Use Report was publicly launched today by Dr. Pellizzari in front of the recently installed no-smoking signs at Del Crary Park. "We commend the efforts of the city and the county to reduce public exposure to second hand smoke through new initiatives like the recent inclusion of parks in the City's Smoking by-law," said Dr. Pellizzari. She noted that the report found that overall public awareness of the risks associated with tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke has increased in the past two years in this region.

Other highlights of the report include:

- Smoking rates have not dropped significantly in recent years. In 2007, 22.8% of residents in the Peterborough region were smokers.
- Youth experimentation rates do not appear to be decreasing.
- Prenatal smoking rates in the Peterborough region were 18.74% in 2008, almost twice as high as the provincial rate of 9.53%.
- There was an increase in smokers' "intention to quit" – over half of smokers intend to quit smoking in the next 6 months.
- A drop in exposure to second hand smoke – 72% of homes in 2008 did not allow smoking indoors.

This publication marked PCCHU's first time producing a comprehensive tobacco-related report. The report provides valuable information about tobacco use and its impact on the health of people in Peterborough County and City. It also provides an overview of activities that pertain to the three key

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public health goals of prevention, cessation, and protection. This information will be used by the PCCHU to develop targeted community programming. The report identified two important local barriers to reaching public health goals: issues surrounding access to cigarettes and lack of cessation supports.

To access a copy of the full report, please visit:

<http://www.pcchu.ca/Plans/2009%20Tobacco%20Use%20Report.pdf>

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