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Building *Nunavut* Together
Nunavut liuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

Chief Medical Officer of Health's 2015-2016 *Tobacco Control Act*

Annual Report

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INTRODUCTION

The 2015-2016 Tobacco Control Act Annual Report reflects the current progress made on the implementation of the Nunavut *Tobacco Control Act*. The enforcement of this Act is an important program area of tobacco control outlined in Nunavut's *Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action* [1].

With a current territorial tobacco use prevalence rate of 62 percent [2], and local community surveys reporting rates as high as 84 percent [3], reducing tobacco use is an important public health priority in Nunavut. Tobacco-related diseases have a significant impact on the health and well-being of Nunavummiut. This has resulted in a disproportionate amount of negative health impacts on Nunavut's Inuit population, who make up 85 percent of the territory's residents. Furthermore, each year, Nunavummiut continue to purchase more cigarettes, with over 56.2 million cigarettes bought in 2015, up from 54.5 million in 2014ⁱ[4, 5].

Nunavut has an age-standardized lung cancer rate of 157.49 cases per 100,000 population, which is almost three times the national rate of 53.78 cases per 100,000 population [6]. It is known that approximately 90% of lung cancer cases are caused by tobacco use, however, the incidence of lung cancer often occurs decades after smoking initiation. For this same reason, a reduction in lung cancer rates regularly lags years behind significant reductions in smoking rates.

In May 2004, the Government of Nunavut enacted the *Nunavut Tobacco Control Act* as a means to help reduce the harms caused by consuming tobacco. The *TCA* represents a significant benchmark in territory-wide tobacco control, which aims to:

- § Promote and protect the health and well-being of Nunavummiut by ensuring that public places and workplaces are smoke free; and
- § To reduce access to tobacco products, especially to youth, through restrictions on the display and sale of tobacco products.

ⁱ Nunavut territory-wide reported cigarette sales, by stick, per calendar year.

To support the *TCA* and territory wide tobacco reduction activities, Nunavut's Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action, 2011-2016, was developed. This framework for action has been fully evaluated, with a final report expected in 2017.

NUNAVUT TOBACCO EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Nunavut Tobacco Education and Compliance Program (TECP) was developed to support the enforcement of Nunavut's *Tobacco Control Act* through the use of education and outreach activities to achieve tobacco retailer compliance. Since tobacco retailers are the main source for purchasing tobacco products, the TECP team has been working to ensure that tobacco retailers understand their responsibilities under the *TCA* and regulations. A large focus of TECP work is focused on preventing tobacco sales to people under the age of 19 years.

The implementation of the TECP is planned over three phases:

- 1) Phase I: Development of tobacco education and outreach training materials (completed in 2014/2015);
- 2) Phase II: Delivery of education and outreach training to tobacco retailers (2015/2016); and
- 3) Phase III: Tobacco retailer inspections (expected to start in 2016/2017).

Phase I (2014/2015)

Phase I of the Nunavut Tobacco Education and Compliance Program focused on developing the Nunavut Tobacco Retailer Toolkit. It was created to provide tobacco retailers and their staff with practical resources to help them understand their responsibilities as a licensed tobacco retailer in Nunavut. The Tobacco Retailer Toolkits are available in all four official languages and include signage mandated under the *Act*. They also include an employee training poster containing infographics about the *TCA*, and a tool to help staff calculate the customer's age to help ensure they are over the age of 19 years.

Phase II (2015/2016)

Phase II began in October 2015 and focused on the following key deliverables:

- § Distributed and analyzed the 2015 Tobacco Retailer Survey to establish a baseline of the tobacco retailer's understanding of their responsibilities under the TCA;
- § Delivered TCA and Tobacco Retailer Toolkit training to TECP staff and Environmental Health Officers;
- § Completed education and outreach visits with the 93 licensed tobacco retailers in all 25 communities in Nunavut;
- § Development of a TECP policy and procedural manual to guide the work of Environmental Health Officers and TECP program staff (in progress);
- § Created and implemented an online database for monitoring and tracking of tobacco enforcement activities;
- § Developed and implemented a process to ensure that all current and future Environmental Health Officers (by class) are appointed as "Inspectors" under the *Tobacco Control Act*; and
- § Updated the "Tobacco and the Law" webpage on the NUQuits.ca website.

Findings from the 2015 Tobacco Retailer Survey include [7]:

- § Just over half (52%) of tobacco retailers surveyed indicated that there was no signage posted about not smoking within three meters of the entrance.
- § Approximately one-quarter of tobacco retailers (27%) indicated that their employees who sell tobacco products are only somewhat knowledgeable about Nunavut's tobacco sales laws.
- § Almost all tobacco retailers surveyed (96%) said they train their employees about selling tobacco legally.

With continued education and compliance visits by Environmental Health Officers, it is expected that there will be:

- § Increased awareness and knowledge of GN and Federal tobacco regulations;
- § Increased compliance with GN and Federal tobacco legislation and regulations;
- § Increased protection from tobacco-related harms; and
- § A strengthened regulatory framework and increased enforcement capacity.

Phase III - MOVING FORWARD (October 2016 and onwards)

Key deliverables in this next phase will include:

- § Training and implementation of the environmental public health inspection software program;
- § Inspection training for Environmental Health Officers and TCEP program staff;
- § Consideration of effective ways to apply penalties;
- § Distribution and analysis of the 2016 Tobacco Retailer Survey (follow-up to the 2015 baseline Tobacco Retailer Survey);
- § Distribution of the Nunavut Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action, Evaluation Results;
- § Planning for the establishment of an Automatic Prohibition process under the TCA; and
- § Inspections at retail sites.

CONCLUSION

While most Canadian jurisdictions have seen steady declines in smoking and tobacco use prevalence rates, Nunavut's consistently high rates have resulted in a critical public health issue. Evidence from other jurisdictions supports that the enforcement of tobacco control legislation is an effective strategy that helps to improve tobacco retailer compliance and decreases youth access to tobacco products. The Government of Nunavut is committed to the full implementation of Nunavut Tobacco Education and Compliance Program with the goal of helping to reduce the harms caused by tobacco use in Nunavut.

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