



Smoke-Free Nova Scotia
www.smokefreens.ca

P.O. Box 822, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia B4C 3V3
Tel:(902) 864-9633 Toll:1-866-777-7374 Fax:(902)484-6946

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Nova Scotia Must Increase Tobacco Control Efforts in Light of Stagnant Smoking Rate

Halifax (August 13, 2009) – Nova Scotia health groups expressed concern today that smoking rates in the province have leveled off, according to final 2008 data released by Health Canada.

The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey found that 20% of Nova Scotians smoked in 2008, the same smoking rate as 2007. The national smoking rate was 18%. British Columbia had the lowest smoking rate at 15%.

“Nova Scotia’s lack of progress shows that we need to increase our efforts to reduce tobacco use,” Sharon MacIntosh, spokesperson for Smoke-Free Nova Scotia, said. “Tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death in Nova Scotia. It costs our health care system over \$171 million per year. Governments at all levels need to renew their commitment to reduce tobacco use.”

“Nova Scotia’s per capita spending on tobacco control is below the national average,” Ms. MacIntosh said. “We need to expand prevention programs, to deter young people from starting to smoke, and cessation programs that help people who currently smoke to stop.”

Ms MacIntosh noted that the recent provincial tobacco tax increase is an opportunity for the provincial government to increase investment in tobacco use prevention and cessation. The government raised tobacco taxes by 5 cents per cigarette on June 23, which it estimates will raise \$21 million in revenue in the current fiscal year alone. Nova Scotia currently invests only \$2.4 million per year in tobacco control.

Ms MacIntosh also urged the federal government to crack down on contraband tobacco manufacturing, and called on the Senate to pass Bill C-32 as quickly as possible when Parliament resumes sitting in September. Bill C-32 would ban many flavoured tobacco products, as well as tobacco advertising in print publications. The House of Commons passed Bill C-32 unanimously in June, but it needs to be passed by the Senate before it becomes law.

“We need to stop the tobacco industry from continuing to advertise its addictive products in youth-oriented publications like *The Coast*, and from continuing to market flavoured tobacco that attracts young people to experiment,” Ms. MacIntosh said. “It is important that the Senate pass Bill C-32 as soon as possible.”

Smoke Free Nova Scotia is a coalition of twenty-three health groups whose goal is the elimination of tobacco use in Nova Scotia.