

Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
Campagne Ontarienne D'Action Contre le Tabac

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Founding Agencies:

Canadian Cancer Society–Ontario Division
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario
Non-Smokers' Rights Association
Ontario Lung Association
Ontario Medical Association

Supporting Agencies:

Alcohol and Drug Concerns Inc.
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Cancer Care Ontario
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies
Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors
Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
Ontario Physical and Health Education Association
Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
The Ontario College of Family Physicians

BEER SALES CHANGES NO PROOF OF SMOKE-FREE BYLAW IMPACT

Toronto – Minor changes in major brand beer sales do nothing to demonstrate the impact of smoke-free bylaws in Ontario, contrary to allegations by Ottawa-based bar and pub owners, says Ontario's largest tobacco control coalition.

"Figures from the Brewers of Ontario released today by the Pub and Bar Coalition of Ontario (PUBCO) allegedly show a larger decline in beer sales in municipalities with 100% smoke-free bylaws than in those without such bylaws, but are in fact incomplete and misleading," said Michael Perley, Director of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco.

"These numbers only reflect major brand sales and do not include imports – to which more and more beer drinkers are switching – nor sales from most microbreweries," Perley said today. "They also do not account for changes in wine sales, spirit sales or food sales in Ontario hospitality establishments. Finally, they do not account for other economic factors in the municipalities in question, such as the impact of 9/11, the high-tech meltdown in Ottawa, seasonal variations in beer consumption, changing consumer preferences in favour of imported beers, or overall reduction in alcohol consumption patterns." Without a comprehensive analysis of all these factors, there is no way to assign responsibility for any alcohol consumption change – either upward or downward – to any specific factor.

"The impact of Ottawa's bylaw has been extensively studied by the accounting firm KPMG," Perley said, "and that company has not found any evidence of negative economic impact due to the City's bylaw. Furthermore, proprietors in Waterloo who launched a lawsuit for compensation alleging lost business directly caused by that region's 100% smoke-free bylaw, could not provide any evidence of any lost business from the bylaw, and their case was thrown out of court."

Finally, Perley noted that the hospitality sector is a volatile one. Statistics Canada estimates that the failure rate for new premises after one year is 20%, and this rises to two-thirds after five years. Selecting out smoke-free bylaws as a cause of failures in an extremely volatile industry is misleading, Perley said.

The Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco is a self-funded coalition of provincial health agencies that have been working together since the early '90s in support of the implementation of effective tobacco control policies in the province of Ontario.

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For more:

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