



Finding answers. For life.



August 29, 2006

To All Mayor and Councils and Regional Boards in British Columbia

Re: Resolution at UBCM Convention to make BC 100% Smoke-Free with No
Provision for Designated Smoking Rooms

On behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon and the BC Lung Association, which make up the Clean Air Coalition of BC, we are writing to seek your support for a Resolution submitted to the UBCM by the City of Merritt, calling on the Provincial Government to make BC 100% Smoke-free, with no provision for Designated Smoking Rooms (DSR).

The health risks of exposure to second-hand smoke are extensive, well documented and irrefutable. The U.S. Surgeon General released a definitive report on June 27, 2006 that conclusively states there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke, and that even brief exposure can adversely impact the cardiovascular system, increasing the risk of a heart attack. The report found that non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke at home or in the workplace increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30% and lung cancer by 20 to 30%. The report concluded that the only way to protect non-smokers from the known carcinogens in second-hand smoke is to eliminate all smoking indoors.

Despite the indisputable scientific evidence however, BC is one of only three jurisdictions in the country that has refused to implement province-wide legislation to protect workers and the public from second-hand smoke. While BC was once considered a Canadian and world leader in tobacco control, we have now fallen behind ten other provinces and territories that have implemented 100% smoke-free legislation in public places and work places, with no allowances for DSRs. We are even lagging behind Quebec, which historically had one of the highest smoking rates in the country, and which now has 100% smoke-free public places legislation and no DSRs.

The existing workplace legislation (WCB Regulation) was imposed by the provincial government in 2002, despite the specific rejection of the WCB Panel of Administrators, and the unwavering objection of the health community. While smoking is prohibited in most workplaces under the WCB Regulation, public entertainment facilities (including restaurants, bars, bingo halls, bowling alleys, and gambling casinos) were specifically exempted, based on unfounded economic considerations, to permit smoking in separately structured and ventilated DSRs. This has resulted in a two-tier system in BC where workers in the hospitality sector receive less protection from second-hand smoke than all other workers in the province. While hospitality workers are given the choice of whether to work in these smoking rooms, no other workers in the province have to choose between a safe workplace and their health.

On May 22, 2006, Heather Crowe died of lung cancer as a result of working in smoky restaurants for years, even though she never smoked a day in her life. After her

diagnosis, Heather spent her remaining time traveling the country on a nation-wide campaign to alert people to the thousands of Canadians who die each year as a result of being exposed to second-hand smoke. Heather put a face to the issue of worker exposure to second-hand smoke, and to the tragic consequences of lax and ineffective policies built on unfounded fear, hearsay and conjecture.

The current legislation is indefensible. You can continue to make a real difference at the UBCM Convention by supporting the Resolution calling on the provincial government to implement province-wide legislation to ban all indoor smoking, with no provisions for designated smoking rooms. Your support will help ensure that Heather will be the last person to die from involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke.

If you have any questions on this issue, we ask you to contact Jack Boomer, Director of the Clean Air Coalition at 250-721-4268 or by email at jackboomer@shaw.ca.

Sincerely,



R.F. Bobbe Wood, MA
President & CEO
Heart and Stroke Foundation
of B.C. & Yukon



Scott McDonald
Executive Director
BC Lung Association

PC. Jack Boomer
Director, Clean Air Coalition of BC