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LUNG ASSOCIATION & HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR A SMOKE-FREE BC

The BC Lung Association and Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon applaud recent efforts by government to toughen BC tobacco laws, but are calling for even bolder action to achieve a smoke-free BC.

Both are principal members of the Clean Air Coalition of BC, an advocacy organization which today unveiled its new province-wide crusade: [Imagine! A Smoke-Free BC.](#)

"Social norms have changed. Non-smokers outnumber smokers four to one. We feel the timing's right to work towards creating a smoke-free BC," says Scott McDonald, Executive Director of the BC Lung Association.

"Imagine! A Smoke-Free BC calls upon BC organizations and individuals to join forces and push action forward on 11 key tobacco use reduction measures," says Bobbe Wood, President and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon.

"Taken together, these 11 new measures will take BC tobacco control efforts to a higher level, re-establish us nationally as the leader in this field, and will certainly prepare us to be the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympic Games," Wood added.

At the top of the campaign's wish list is province-wide legislation requiring smoke-free outdoor patios and prohibition of smoking in motor vehicles when a person under the age of 19 is present.

"Smoking bans work. So do increases in cigarette taxes," says Wood. "But there's more to reducing tobacco use than forcing people to take it outside."

So while under new BC laws, tobacco use is banned in all indoor public places, on public and private school property, and in entranceways to public buildings, "We're advocating for 100 percent smoke-free outdoor patios," says Wood.

And while new laws ban tobacco advertising and product displays where minors have access, "we strongly advocate for the prohibition of tobacco sales in pharmacies," says McDonald.

"We also want to see nicotine replacement therapy and other proven smoking cessation tools made available, on a subsidized basis, to all British Columbians ready to quit and an increase in the availability of smoke-free housing," says Wood.

Six thousand British Columbians die annually from smoking-related illnesses – twice the number who die from alcohol, suicide, and homicide combined. Thousands more are disabled by lung and heart diseases, and countless others suffer the consequences due to second-hand smoke exposure.

"Cigarette smoking may seem a minor offence compared to fossil fuel emissions, but the fact that more than half a million British Columbians continue to smoke and put both themselves and those around them at risk is something we think about every day," says McDonald.

Recent tobacco ban victories aside, the smoke-free campaign wages on!

Clean Air Coalition of BC (www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com)

The BC Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon are the primary members of the Clean Air Coalition of BC, an advocacy organization committed to reducing the harm caused by tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke. Their goal: a smoke-free BC.

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