



Media Release

For Immediate Release

January 22, 2007

The Next Frontier: Smoke-Free Policies in Apartments

Vancouver, B.C. – The Clean Air Coalition of BC (CAC), which is made up of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon and the BC Lung Association, is calling on provincial and municipal governments to act now to direct the social housing sector to create smoke-free housing options for people living with chronic health issues that are worsened by repeated exposure to second-hand smoke.

“There is an urgent demand for smoke-free housing in BC. We receive weekly calls from anxious residents living in multi-unit housing complexes whose health is being compromised from tobacco smoke drifting into their homes from neighbouring units.” stated Bobbe Wood, President and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon. “Since this is National Non-Smoking Week, addressing this gap would be one more step toward Premier Campbell’s commitment to make BC the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host the Olympic Games.” added Wood.

Despite the fact that over 85% of British Columbians do not smoke, and over one million British Columbians rent their homes, there is currently a huge void of available smoke-free housing for non-smoking residents. This is especially true in the subsidized housing sector, where the major housing providers like BC Housing and the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation have no designated smoke-free buildings to ensure that people with respiratory illness are protected. “If they can accommodate those with physical disabilities, they should be able to set aside a few buildings for those whose life is at risk with any level of exposure to second-hand smoke,” stated Scott McDonald, Executive Director, BC Lung Association.

“We find that many landlords don’t realize that smoke-free policies are completely legal.” stated Jack Boomer, Director of the Clean Air Coalition of BC. “Yet landlords can legally include ‘no-smoking’ clauses in all new tenancy agreements, banning smoking in individual units, including outdoor patios, balconies and the entire property. This is no different than policies that restrict noise or pets, or any other policy that protects other tenants well being or the landlord’s property.”

“Unfortunately there is still a widespread belief that smoking in private dwellings is a private rights matter, and that the home is your castle,” added Boomer. “Given how dangerous second-hand smoke really is, we believe that the issue needs to be reframed to convey that tenant’s have a right NOT to be exposed to a known carcinogen in their own homes.”

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The Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon and the BC Lung Association work collaboratively together to support smoke-free environments through the Clean Air Coalition of BC.
www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com