

# The Case for Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing

## WHY BC GOVERNMENT ACTION CANNOT WAIT

SUBMITTED TO THE  
BC Ministry of Health  
JUNE 7, 2016



## **SUBMITTED TO THE BC MINISTRY OF HEALTH BY:**

### **The Clean Air Coalition of BC**

The BC Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation, BC & Yukon work together as partners in the Clean Air Coalition to raise public awareness about the serious health risks of exposure to second-hand smoke and to advocate for smoke-free environments.

### **SmokeFreeHousingBC.ca**

The Clean Air Coalition of BC manages [smokefreehousingbc.ca](http://smokefreehousingbc.ca), a resource for landlords, strata corporations and residents on smoke-free housing issues. Our website was the first site of its kind in Canada and has been replicated nation-wide.

### **The Lung Association**

For more than 100 years, the Lung Association has led the fight for healthy lungs and healthy air. The Lung Association is the leading organization in Canada working to save lives, prevent and improve lung health through research, advocacy, education and support. [bc.lung.ca](http://bc.lung.ca)

### **The Heart and Stroke Foundation**

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's mission is to prevent disease, save lives and promote recovery. A volunteer-based health charity, we strive to tangibly improve the health of every Canadian family, every day. Healthy lives free of heart disease and stroke. Together we will make it happen. [heartandstroke.ca](http://heartandstroke.ca)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
2. WHY GOVERNMENT ACTION CANNOT WAIT .....	3
3. OUR ADVOCACY WORK .....	8
4. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BC? .....	9
5. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CANADA? .....	10
6. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE US? .....	11
7. OUR RECOMMENDATIONS .....	13
APPENDIX I ADVOCACY WORK ACHIEVEMENTS .....	16
APPENDIX II TERMINOLOGY .....	19

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A recent study found half of those living in BC multi-unit housing had experienced second-hand smoke entering their homes from neighbouring units. As BC housing continues to densify, the problem will only get worse.

One in two people on average live in multi-unit housing today. Numbers in urban centres are even steeper (45 percent province-wide, 62 percent in Greater Vancouver<sup>1</sup>). Furthermore, eight in 10 British Columbians would prefer to live in a 100 percent smoke-free environment.

The challenge is that while our laws protect us from second-hand smoke in virtually all work and public places, and in building common areas, there is no protection within housing units and on balconies in multi-unit buildings and townhome complexes.

Our smoking rate, at 14 percent, may be Canada's lowest, but those who do smoke, smoke at home and on their balconies, perpetuating the health hazard of second-hand smoke exposure we are working to resolve.

Increasing numbers of multi-unit housing residents are finding themselves trapped with unwelcome second-hand smoke infiltrating their homes. This is especially problematic for vulnerable populations: the elderly, people with chronic conditions, and those living in public housing. Many have neither the income to consider alternatives nor affordable options to choose from. British Columbians want to live in smoke-free environments, but the supply of 100 percent smoke-free multi-unit housing options is sorely lacking in BC.

For over a decade, we've worked to encourage and equip housing providers with the resources to voluntarily implement 100 percent smoke-free policies. Unfortunately, they have been slow to respond.

It's possible the slow adoption rate may be due to misconceptions about the challenges of implementing no-smoking policies, including concerns about increased vacancy rates and tenant turnover, impacts on condo sales, compliance and enforcement issues, and the legality of such policies. We don't know.

What we do believe is that to make progress a legislated or regulatory approach is now warranted.

The public debate regarding second-hand smoke is over. There is no tolerance for breathing toxic second-hand smoke at home.

To address the issue, we make five specific recommendations in this report:

1. Develop smoking status disclosure laws
2. Amend *Residential Tenancy Act* to make it easier to go smoke-free
3. Adopt smoke-free policies for all BC Housing properties
4. Amend *Strata Property Act* to make all new strata corporations smoke-free
5. Introduce incentives for builders/developers to establish smoke-free properties

It follows that the more smoke-free housing options there are, the more smoke-free British Columbians there will be.

We're hopeful the Province will agree, and take steps to ensure living in a smoke-free home becomes a basic health protection afforded every British Columbian – not just those fortunate to be living in single, detached homes.

## WHY GOVERNMENT ACTION CANNOT WAIT

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The debate is over: second-hand smoke is a serious health hazard.

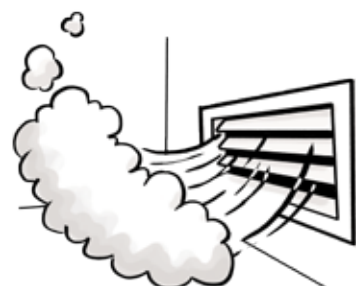
U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona, 2006

- **Even breathing second-hand smoke for a short amount of time can be hazardous to your health.** Second-hand smoke causes heart disease, lung cancer and respiratory problems. Pregnant women exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to have babies who have a higher risk for serious health problems (including low birth weight and lung problems). Children exposed to second-hand smoke get more ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, severe asthma attacks. Infants exposed to second-hand smoke are at increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.<sup>2</sup>
- **There is no amount of risk-free exposure to second-hand smoke;** even a little can be dangerous. Second-hand smoke contains 7,000 toxic chemicals, approximately 70 of which can cause cancer.<sup>3</sup> Breathing second-hand smoke at home or at work increases the chances of developing lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent, even in people who have never smoked.<sup>4</sup>
- **One-quarter of the population suffers from medical conditions,** such as asthma and heart disease that are worsened by exposure to second-hand smoke.
- **Emerging evidence also points to hazards associated with exposure to third-hand smoke, chemicals and compounds from residual second-hand smoke** that settle on surfaces or in dust and can persist for long periods of time. This has implications for the health of tenants who move into units previously occupied by smokers who smoked inside their home.<sup>5</sup>



## Second-hand smoke exposure is escalating; and public tolerance fast diminishing.

- **50 percent of people living in multi-unit housing are exposed to second-hand smoke.** And when your neighbours smoke, you end up inhaling toxic smoke too. A 2013 study by Angus Reid of multi-unit housing residents found that 50 percent had experienced second-hand smoke entering their homes from neighbouring units. Despite the low BC smoking rate, this represents an increase from 30 percent in 2008.
- **The movement of second-hand smoke cannot be controlled.** Tobacco smoke particles and gases can travel from unit to unit through light fixtures, electrical outlets, plumbing fixtures, walls, ceiling crawl spaces, shared ventilation systems and from balconies and patios. The smoke clings to furniture, clothes, rugs, walls and floors, and lingers for months, mixing with common pollutants to form carcinogens and particles that are potentially hazardous for children (and pets).
- **Air filters, purifiers and ventilation systems do not remove all the chemicals in second-hand smoke and should not be considered viable alternatives to smoking bans in multi-unit dwellings.** The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers determined that there is currently no air filtration or other ventilation technology that can completely eliminate all carcinogenic components in second-hand smoke, and recommends that indoor environments be smoke-free in their entirety.<sup>6</sup>
- **Multi-unit housing is the fastest growing segment of the housing market in Canada.** With increasing densification in BC, more people are living side by side. Most Canadians already restrict smoking in their own homes (Stats Canada), but those living in apartments and condominiums cannot control the smoke drifting from neighbouring units. *(An unintended consequence of the move to ban smoking in the home, is that many residents living in multi-unit housing are smoking on their balconies and patios – the primary source of smoke infiltration between units.)*
- **Smoke-free housing should not be a luxury afforded to only those who live in single, detached homes.** With close to half of BC households living in multi-unit housing, securing a smoke-free home should be a basic health protection afforded every British Columbian.



## British Columbians want smoke-free housing, but supply is scarce.

- **86/100 British Columbians are non-smokers.** The market for 100 percent smoke-free housing is BIG. People want to live in a clean air environment, but whether you are a renter or looking to buy your dream condo, there is a critical shortage of smoke-free living options. And, once you find yourself in a unit with smoke infiltration from neighbouring units, your options are limited.
- **There is huge public support for smoke-free housing.** According to a 2013 Angus Reid survey of 833 BC multi-unit housing residents, including renters and owners:
  - 2/3 prefer buildings where smoking is prohibited inside units and out<sup>7</sup>
  - 2/3 would support a decision to prohibit smoking in their building
  - 3/4 support making rental units smoke-free upon departure of existing tenant
  - 3/4 support more no-smoking bylaws that apply to all inside units and balconies
- **The same survey found a very significant majority want disclosure:**
  - Whether smoking is permitted in housing units or on balconies (96 percent)
  - Which units are designated smoking (90 percent)
  - Whether or not a previous tenant or owner was a smoker (87 percent)
  - Whether or not there have been past complaints about second-hand smoke, and/or whether or not an enforceable no-smoking policy exists (85 percent)
- **Given our red-hot real estate market and inadequate smoke-free housing supply, British Columbians cannot escape the smoke infiltrating their homes from neighbouring units.** With vacancy rates as low as 0.6 percent, finding alternate accommodations is nearly impossible. Many stick it out despite the impacts to their health.
- **People living in public housing have even fewer options.** For many tenants, social housing providers are the landlord of last resort. Some people wait years to secure a subsidized unit, only to find themselves and their families involuntarily exposed to second-hand smoke on a regular basis. They do not have the means to move. Further, many of these residents are already marginalized with higher rates of disability and chronic disease.<sup>8</sup> Reducing risks like exposure to second-hand smoke could result in improved health outcomes for these residents.



## What's the hold-up? With smoke-free housing everybody wins.

- **Clean and safe environments should be a basic right for people who don't have any other housing options.** People living in subsidized, affordable housing often don't have the luxury of choice and thus have unequal access to safe and healthy homes. Banning smoking in social housing can be a controversial subject. Because smoking is legal and a difficult addiction for many to overcome, there is a common perception that lower income people should not be asked to give up smoking at home when higher income people living in detached homes are not. The real issue however is not the injustice to people who smoke, but prioritizing the protection of vulnerable residents – children, the elderly and the disabled – who are more susceptible to the health impacts of tobacco smoke.
- **Smoke-free housing is good for health AND good for business.** It's one of the quickest and easiest ways to reduce cleaning and maintenance costs (turnover costs can be triple or quadruple the costs for non-smoking units). It saves staff time spent dealing with second-hand smoke complaints; it reduces the risk of fires (smoking is the second leading cause of residential fires<sup>9</sup>) and it saves potential costs on group insurance rates. Smoke-free housing also increases marketability.
- **Smoke-free housing is the right approach for social housing.** A 2014 study by the US Centre for Disease Control found that almost \$500 million per year could be saved by banning smoking in all government subsidized housing. This includes about \$310 million in second-hand smoke-related healthcare, \$134 million in smoking-related renovation expenses, and \$53 million in smoking-related fire losses. This is the first study of its kind, and shows that adopting no-smoking policies protects not only public health, but the public interest as well, in addition to saving significant costs.<sup>10</sup> The US is now moving to prohibit smoking in all government subsidized buildings.
- **Smoke-free housing sells faster and more easily.** For condo owners, the savings can be significant. In 2015, a survey of 200 BC REALTORS® found that the smell of smoke – which gets absorbed into carpets, walls and ceilings – can lower the resale value and make it more difficult to sell.<sup>11</sup>



## And more smoke-free homes means more smoke-free British Columbians.

Smoke-free policies have a significant ripple effect. While smoke-free housing policies generally focus on mitigating the harmful effects of tobacco smoke on non-smokers, there is evidence that smoke-free policies also help smokers quit smoking.

One US study of low-income residents in multi-family housing shows that the quit rate was 14.7 percent after the implementation of a smoke-free policy, compared to a common quit rate of about 2.6 percent.<sup>12</sup>

Further, according to research by the Ontario Tobacco Research unit, a study of various tobacco control measures aimed at decreasing smoking prevalence between 1996 and 2012 found that smoke-free policies were one of two top contributors to the lowering of provincial smoking rates.

According to Ontario research findings, the top three most effective measures for decreasing smoking rates were: 1) taxation (35 percent); 2) smoke-free policies (27 percent); and 3) cessation treatment policies (16 percent).

Thus, it follows, the more smoke-free homes there are in BC, the more smoke-free British Columbians there will be.

### Working towards a Smoke-Free BC!



## OUR ADVOCACY WORK

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In relation to other provinces and territories in Canada, British Columbia is at the forefront of the smoke-free multi-unit housing issue.

The Clean Air Coalition of BC (comprised of the BC Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation, BC & Yukon) is also a founding member of the Canadian Smoke-Free Housing Coalition, and played a key part in developing the Coalition's National Strategy.

In 2007, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, BC & Yukon was chosen to lead a two-year initiative: *Smoke-Free Housing in Multi-Unit Dwellings*, one of the five initiatives that made up the Tobacco Reduction Strategy funded by the BC Healthy Living Alliance and supported by the Ministry of Health through ActNowBC. Key priorities included:

- Engaging the multi-housing sector and other key stakeholders on the issue
- Encouraging and supporting housing providers to adopt smoke-free policies
- Developing tools and resources to help with smoke-free policy implementation

Over the last seven years, the Clean Air Coalition of BC has spearheaded a number of initiatives to address the escalating problem of second-hand smoke in multi-unit housing. (A summary of our activities conducted over the years to address this issue are outlined in Appendix 1.) Further, we continue to tackle constant calls and emails from individuals and families suffering from exposure to unwanted smoke at home – on average 30 requests per month.

We are also experiencing a significant increase in requests for help from landlords and strata corporations eager to find out how to convert their buildings to smoke-free status.

While attitudes are shifting amongst multi-housing sector leaders, the voluntary approach is an insufficient driver. Overall, the sector has been slow to respond.

It's possible the slow adoption rate may be due to misconceptions about the challenges of implementing no-smoking policies, including concerns about increased vacancy rates and tenant turnover, impacts on condo sales, compliance and enforcement issues, and the legality of such policies.

These concerns highlight the importance of government action and support to lead the way, and the need for further education on the health and economic benefits of going smoke-free.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA?



### **Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC)**

Heather Place is a leader in the affordable housing sector, offering 100 percent smoke-free homes. They designated six rental buildings for transition to smoke-free status (impacting 324 units and 20 townhouses). They are in the process of banning smoking on all balconies in accordance with Section 2.2(e) of the City of Vancouver Health Bylaw #9535, including an e-cigarette ban in all no-smoking policies. They are also in the process of developing messaging to tenants that all common areas (indoors and out) on MVHC housing sites are smoke free. Signage is on order and will soon be posted at all playgrounds and ball courts.

### **BC strata corporations**

The BC Smoke-Free Housing Registry lists over 30 strata corporations in Vancouver that have implemented no-smoking bylaws. Of those listed, the majority listed on the registry have adopted bylaws that ban smoking within units, balconies and the entire property, and most did NOT grandfather existing owners. *Note: the housing registry listings are voluntary and not at all exhaustive.*

### **Private landlords and property managers**

The Smoke-Free Housing Registry lists over 80 multi-unit housing complexes across the province (63 market rate rentals and 20 affordable housing), but despite the strong demand for smoke-free housing, landlords have been slow to meet the growing demand. The companies that have adopted no-smoking policies have implemented a patchwork of policies, including banning smoking inside units only, or banning smoking both inside units and outside balconies.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE REST OF CANADA?



### Ontario social housing providers

Over 100 affordable housing providers across the province have adopted no-smoking policies. These policies ban smoking in the private units of multi-unit housing, protecting many of Ontario's most vulnerable tenants. For more examples see: <http://smoke-freehousingon.ca>

### Region of Waterloo

Effective April 1, 2010, the Region of Waterloo became the first Regional Municipality in Ontario to adopt a policy making all regionally-owned and operated Community Housing units 100 percent smoke-free (impacting 2,700 units). All new residents are required to sign tenancy agreements banning smoking in the residential unit, including balconies or patios, while existing tenants were 'grandfathered.' To date, about 30 other social housing providers in Ontario have implemented smoke-free policies.

### The City of St. John's

In 2008, the city became the first municipal jurisdiction in Canada to adopt a smoke-free policy for all its 124 non-profit housing complexes. The policy required that all new tenants who sign tenancy agreements with the city must agree not to smoke inside their units or on their outside balconies. Current tenants were grandfathered.

### The Greater Edmonton Foundation Housing for Seniors

In 2007, the largest housing provider in Alberta implemented a smoke-free policy impacting 1,891 units across the city. The Foundation converted all their units to smoke-free status, based on reasons that included: health and safety of all tenants; unsafe smokers; and damage to property.

### The Yukon Housing Corporation

In January 2012, the Yukon Housing Corporation implemented a no-smoking policy banning smoking inside all their buildings. Smoking is allowed only on private balconies or patios, and outside at least five metres from a shared entrance in the multi-unit buildings. This policy applies to social and staff housing. They are now looking at extending the policy to include balconies.

*Note: this is not an exhaustive list.*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE US?



US public housing is going smoke-free nation-wide.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is encouraging the adoption of smoke-free policies for all Public Housing Authorities they fund.

In 2000, HUD issued notices to all Authorities stating that the US Department “strongly encourages Authorities to implement non-smoking policies in some or all of their public housing units.” This voluntary approach resulted in 612 of 3,058 Public Housing Agencies adopting smoke-free policies in at least some housing. In 2015, HUD Secretary Julian Castro issued a country-wide rule to prohibit smoking in all public housing.

The new HUD rule proposes<sup>13</sup> all Public Housing Authorities must implement a policy prohibiting smoking in all units, common areas and outdoor areas within 25 feet of housing, no later than 18 months from the effective date of the final rule (goes into effect end of 2016).

This potentially affects two million individuals living in 954,000 homes in all 50 US states and could result in annual cost savings of \$153 million, including \$94 million in health care savings, and \$59 million in reduced property costs.

The rule is implemented to improve indoor air quality in the housing, benefit the health of public housing residents, reduce the risk of catastrophic fires, and lower overall maintenance costs.

California is the US state leader on the issue:

- 24 cities/counties require at least 75 percent of contiguous units in apartments be non-smoking.
- 13 cities/counties require 100 percent of both apartments and condos be non-smoking: Belmont, Berkeley, Richmond (existing tenants not grandfathered), Sebastopol, Santa Clara County unincorporated, Pasadena, Sonoma County unincorporated, Compton, Alameda (city), Huntington Park, San Rafael, Petaluma, Walnut Creek.
- 8 cities/counties have Disclosure laws: Albany, Dublin (apartments only), Fremont, Oakland, Contra Costa County unincorporated, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Martinez.

- 6 cities/counties have a Nuisance Designation for second-hand tobacco smoke: Dublin, Fremont, San Leandro, Union City, Martinez, Pleasant Hill.
- 3 cities/counties do not allow smoking on all private balconies, decks: Martinez, Contra Costa County unincorporated, San Ramon.
- 1 city/county has a no-smoking rule within 25 feet of windows, doors and vents. This will have the effect of banning smoking on most balconies and patios in apartments and condominiums: Santa Monica City Council.

### **Gold star legislation in South Pasadena, California**

South Pasadena City Council passed a comprehensive housing ordinance that requires no smoking in 80 percent of apartment units to be located adjacent to each other, and no smoking on balconies and patios of non-smoking units. The ordinance will also require disclosure, and will state that exposure to tobacco smoke is a nuisance. It will also require no smoking in all condominiums, unless the Homeowners' Association votes to change that.

### **Oregon implemented a disclosure requirement**

Landlords must state whether smoking is prohibited on the premises, allowed on the entire premises or allowed in limited areas on the premises. If the smoking policy allows smoking in limited areas on the premises, the disclosure must identify the areas on the premises where smoking is allowed.

### **Utah implemented new nuisance legislation**

In Utah, drifting second-hand smoke is now included as Nuisance Law. Tobacco smoke that drifts into any residential unit a person rents, leases, or owns from another residential or commercial unit and this smoke drifts in more than once in each of two or more consecutive seven-day periods can be enforced and lack of adherence penalized.

### **Montana, Maine and North Carolina passed new legislation**

These states passed legislation to have a smoke-free threshold requirement in their Qualified Allocation Plans. This means that any developers applying for federal tax incentives to build affordable housing projects in these states must ensure that the housing is covered by a policy that bans tobacco smoke in all indoor areas.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

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We've worked hard over the past decade to provide housing providers with the tools and resources necessary to voluntarily implement 100 percent smoke-free policies. Unfortunately, they have been slow to respond.

As outlined in this report, the voluntary approach to increasing the supply of smoke-free multi-unit housing options has resulted in a patchwork of smoke-free buildings.

The public want smoke-free housing options. Yet there is a severe shortage of smoke-free housing and unequal protection from second-hand smoke for affordable housing residents.

To effectively protect individuals and families from exposure to second-hand smoke, reduce the risk of fires, reduce overall maintenance and cleaning costs, and ensure all residents are equally protected, we recommend the following:

### **1. Develop smoking status disclosure laws**

Develop disclosure laws requiring landlords and strata corporations to disclose to prospective tenants and buyers the smoking status of the building, and where the smoking units are located in the building so they can be forewarned. Partner with the Real Estate Board to ensure the policy is included in disclosures at point of purchase/sale. This is important to heighten awareness of both landlords and tenants as to smoking prevalence in their buildings; and help ensure renters and buyers with health issues can make informed decisions.

### **2. Amend *Residential Tenancy Act* to make it easier to go smoke-free**

Amend the *Residential Tenancy Act* to permit landlords of existing residential buildings to create a non-smoking policy that applies to the residential premises. All existing tenants would be permitted a six-month written notice prior to the non-smoking policy coming into effect. (Nova Scotia legislation allows landlords to implement a no-smoking rule, with a four-month written notice period provided to tenants prior to their lease anniversary date before the rule can come into effect.)

### **3. Adopt smoke-free policies for all BC Housing properties**

Adopt a non-smoking policy for all public housing properties owned and managed by the BC government (BC Housing). Consider seeking public and stakeholder consultations to address concerns and challenges on moving forward with the smoke-free policy in public housing.



#### 4. Amend *Strata Property Act* to make all new strata corporations smoke-free

Amend the *Strata Property Act* to add a restrictive covenant requiring all new strata developments be non-smoking by default, unless the Strata Council votes to allow smoking. Currently all strata developments allow smoking in individual units unless the new Strata Council passes a bylaw to make the complex non-smoking. We recommend reversing this process. The new amendment would not affect existing strata developments.

#### 5. Introduce incentives for builders/developers to establish smoke-free policies

Consider provincial incentives to help stimulate supply of smoke-free housing, including tax credits for developers that designate all new buildings as smoke-free, and reductions in insurance premiums for the affordable housing sector by advocating for insurance premium reductions through their group insurance program. These incentives have been successfully used in the US to stimulate supply.

In the US, a number of states have linked tax incentives with no-smoking policies for new buildings. Minnesota, Maine and California have included a smoke-free incentive point in the application process for low-income housing tax credits, receiving one or more points for including a 100 percent smoke-free building policy in their proposed project. Include information on no-smoking policies on developers' applications for building variances.



## APPENDIX I OUR ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

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### Partnerships with the multi-unit housing industry

- Built partnerships with stakeholders in the multi-unit housing sector, including the Condominium Home Owners' Association (CHOA), Landlord BC, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Professional Association of Managing Agents, Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation and the City of Vancouver.
- Partnered on campaigns to raise awareness and educate housing providers and presented at industry workshops, trade shows and conferences, including the Buildex Tradeshow, Landlord BC workshops, and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association Conference.
- Participated in the National Coalition on smoke-free housing issues and engaged with other jurisdictions across Canada and in the US.

### Collaboration with the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

- Presented to the City of Vancouver and was asked by City Councillors to submit a report, in partnership with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, on recommendations for creating more smoke-free housing options within the city's jurisdiction.
- Prepared a report for the City of Vancouver including recommendations for increasing smoke-free residential buildings funded and/or operated by the city.
- Worked with Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to explore tax incentives to encourage developers to adopt no-smoking policies for all new residential buildings. This work will inform discussions with other municipalities going forward.
- Encouraged the City of Vancouver to add e-cigarettes and vaping products to residential building no-smoking policies – similar to the Vancouver City Health Bylaw.

### Media outreach and educational efforts

- Launched BC's first Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing Month in June 2014. Now, other provincial jurisdictions are launching similar campaigns. (Received Government Proclamation in 2015 and 2016 for Smoke-Free Housing Month.)
- Organized teleconference with US leading smoke-free housing advocates about promoting smoke-free housing month in June 2015 to Canadian and US jurisdictions.
- Organized multiple knowledge exchange sessions with BC health authority staff and other stakeholders who support smoke-free housing.



### Production of smoke-free policy self-help tools

- Developed the first provincial website in Canada for landlords, strata corporations and residents on smoke-free housing issues, including fact sheets on developing no-smoking policies in apartments and condos which includes:
  - Legal opinions on required steps for legality of adopting smoke-free policies in strata corporations and rental buildings for our website.
  - A provincial housing registry for housing providers and residents looking for smoke-free multi-unit housing options.
  - A review of Residential Tenancy Branch and Human Rights Tribunal decisions dealing with second-hand smoke.
- Developed the first national website in Canada to allow people from all jurisdictions to find organizations similar to ours to assist them on smoke-free housing issues.



### Ongoing, daily public support and service

- Respond to daily public requests for assistance on how to deal with unwanted second-hand smoke in homes (including renters, condo owners and public housing residents).
- Respond to weekly requests from housing providers for non-smoking policy assistance (including landlords, strata corporations, non-profits and property managers).
- Attend Residential Tenancy Branch hearings on behalf of residents suffering from second-hand smoke entering their home (K. Frederiksen, January 20, 2015).



### Research and evidence that supports action on smoke-free housing

- Commissioned survey of 200 BC Realtors™ regarding the impact of smoking on resale value (May 2015). Of those surveyed, 76 percent say the resale value is lower if current owners smoke, and smoking units take longer to sell.
- Commissioned surveys to identify level of second-hand smoke exposure and public support for smoke-free housing (2008, 2013). Identified an increase in second-hand smoke exposure rates in multi-unit housing from 30 to 50 percent.
- Produced a report on the financial impacts of smoking in multi-unit housing to encourage housing providers to convert buildings to smoke-free status.
- Conducted cold calls to developers to promote smoke-free buildings.

### Advocacy impacts at-a-glance

- Championed a shift in attitudes amongst multi-housing sector leaders with regard to adoption of non-smoking policies through education and partnership.
- Alerted governments and the public to an increase in exposure rates to second-hand smoking in multi-unit housing. (Research confirms increase from 30 to 50 percent.)
- Highlighted financial benefits to housing providers for going smoke-free, including reduced cleaning and maintenance costs, and reduced risk of fires.
- Earned significant media attention on the issue of smoke-free multi-unit housing since launch of “June is Smoke-Free Housing Month” in 2014. (Earned media is helping educate the public on our research which found smoking in condos lowers resale value and makes a unit more difficult to sell.<sup>10</sup> This survey was widely circulated and used to support the adoption of strata smoke-free bylaws).
- Garnered national and international interest in replicating our smoke-free multi-unit housing month campaign. National Coalition members are now including this campaign in their yearly action plans.
- Increased reach and influence within the multi-unit housing sector through establishment of working relationships with key leaders in this sector.
- Facilitated the implementation of 14 residential rental buildings going smoke-free in the City of Vancouver (JDC Property management). We were approached by the landlord after he attended one of our presentations hosted by Landlord BC.
- Provided support to numerous strata corporations in adopting non-smoking bylaws with no provisions for ‘grandfathered’ owners.
- Assisted residents in their efforts to address unwanted second-hand smoke exposure with their landlords and strata councils.



## APPENDIX II TERMINOLOGY

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### Definition of Multi-Unit Housing (MUH):

- Multi-storey apartment buildings and condominiums
- Houses partitioned into separate apartments
- Duplexes
- Row houses
- Semi-detached houses

### Definition of a no-smoking policy

If enacted, a no-smoking housing policy would prohibit anyone from smoking in individual units and outdoor balconies and patios. Policies may also apply to outdoor common areas and areas within seven meters (25 feet) of windows or doors. Outdoor designated smoking areas could be an option, as long as the area was at least seven meters from windows or doors.

### A no-smoking policy is not discriminatory

Smoke-free housing is NOT about denying occupancy to anyone who smokes, evicting smokers from their homes, or forcing smokers to quit. The issue is about the smoke, not the smoker, and protecting residents from involuntary exposure to this known health hazard.

## FOOTNOTES

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