

Effective Tobacco Policies for Workplaces

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Tobacco kills more than 45 000 Canadians every year. Approximately 20 % of the population smoke and 50% of these smokers want to try to quit. Employers can pay an additional \$2,565 per smoking worker due to absenteeism, lower productivity, increased life insurance premiums, and smoking area maintenance. Provincial policy changes, media campaigns, and changes in employee attitudes towards exposure to second hand smoke have resulted in the need for employers to address smoking in the workplace.

The Government of Ontario (2006) passed the Smoke-free Ontario (SFO) legislation to protect all Ontarians from dangerous second hand smoke. Employers are now responsible for creating and maintaining a smoke-free work environment for their employees. Creating healthier organizations is possible through education programs, self-help materials and additional benefit coverage to help smokers quit.

A workplace policy can be more restrictive than the legislation, depending on the goals and vision of the employer. Some workplaces have a comprehensive workplace tobacco model incorporating 100% smoke-free ground policies. Other employers are able to adopt a modified supportive model. Many decision makers within organizations require more knowledge and resources to create a workplace tobacco strategy that works.

Objectives:

This poster will:

1. Provide a guideline for creating an innovative workplace tobacco strategy.
2. Describe processes to overcome challenges that may occur when implementing and enforcing tobacco policies.
3. Provide a list of resources to assist workplaces with tobacco reduction or cessation for employees.

Author Biographies:

Barb Patten, BScN, RN, is a Public Health Nurse on the Tobacco Prevention Team. She is a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist responsible for cessation programming at Peel Health. She has worked with public and private workplaces in the region to assist with smoke-free policy development and implementation strategies.

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