

# Sunrise Health Region Strategy & Tobacco -free Policy

## Questions & Answers for Public



### General Information about the new Policy

#### **Q. What is the Sunrise Health Region's Tobacco/ Smoke-free Policy?**

**A.** Effective July 1, 2013, smoking or use of other tobacco products is not permitted in the Sunrise Health Region buildings or on the grounds 24 hours per day. This policy applies to everyone including Sunrise staff, volunteers, contracted workers, students, physicians, clients, families and visitors. Under Provincial Tobacco Regulations, there are two exemptions: Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities, (with designated smoking areas) and for cultural/ ceremonial services (prearranged with the facility).

#### **Q. Why is the Sunrise Health Region doing this?**

**A.** Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in this country. There are higher than average smoking rates in Sunrise, and as a Health Region, we have responsibility to be role models by developing policies and supporting actions which are in the best interest of both residents in the region and our staff.

In October, 2010, a provincial strategy to reduce tobacco use was officially announced. The foundation of the strategy is to reduce tobacco use in Saskatchewan through cohesive, coordinated, community-led action.

Through the Strategic Plan deployment process, Sunrise Health Region Board identified the "Tobacco Reduction Strategy" as one of the major breakthrough initiatives for focused attention in 2012-2013 and beyond.

Research has shown there is a direct link between smoking restrictions and smoking behaviour, with fewer people smoking in areas with strong smoking policies. In a recent survey, 82% of Saskatchewan residents indicated support for smoke-free perimeters for health-care facilities.

#### **Q. Does this policy apply to all Sunrise Health Region property, including rural properties and affiliates?**

**A.** The policy includes ALL health region buildings and grounds in Sunrise Health Region, including the affiliates of St. Peter's Hospital, St. Paul Lutheran Home and St. Anthony's Hospital.

Where buildings are leased by the Health Region, it is up to the building owner to determine if smoking/tobacco use will be permitted on their property. However,

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the Health Region expects staff who work in a leased building to be role models by not using tobacco products in the workplace or on the grounds of the workplace.

Private physician medical clinics are not health region properties and the owners of these buildings and grounds will make their own determination.

### Q. Where are the property boundaries?

**A.** Facility boundaries differ from location to location. Typically the boundaries extend to the town/city owned roadways or sidewalks and neighbouring properties.

For YRHC and YDNH the property map is shown below (All land within the blue boundary is health region property).



### Q. Can I smoke/use tobacco in my vehicle?

**A.** The tobacco free zone extends to no smoking in vehicles parked in SHR parking lots.

For the sake of your own health and the health of others who may be traveling with you, do not smoke while in any vehicle, due to the risks of personal exposure or from second-hand smoke in confined spaces.

Please also be aware that clients may refuse to be served by persons who smell of tobacco or other strong scents.

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### Client Access to Benefits and Services

#### **Q. How will clients and public be informed about the new Policy?**

**A.** At the time of admission, all patients are asked about their tobacco-use status. Smokers will be informed of the Tobacco-free Policy upon admission to an acute care or residential facility. Pamphlets and information packages will be widely available to inform family members and visitors and signage will be in place at all facilities. A communications strategy will ensure the public and staff are aware of the new policy and the health region website will provide ongoing information and access to cessation supports.

#### **Q. How will nurses and healthcare providers inform patients about the smoking policy and cessation supports while in acute care facilities?**

**A.** Nurses and other health care professionals will provide patients who use tobacco products with a brief assessment. This entails discussing the patient's use of tobacco products and providing information about access to subsidized Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) while in acute care settings. Depending of the patient's readiness to quit, the health care provider may provide a cessation information kit. Patients who wish to continue to smoke will be informed that they will need to go off health region grounds to do so and will be given a waiver to sign.

#### **Q. What services and benefits are available?**

**A.** Smoking cessation success will be increased by providing acute care in-patients with a variety of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) options such as the nicotine gum and patch, and selected pharmaceutical products. Standing physician orders will be arranged to facilitate access to these products. Costs of these products will be covered while the patient is an in-patient for more than 24 hours in hospital. Providing options encourages those who may have experienced past difficulties in finding suitable tobacco cessation aides during earlier quit attempts. All options are most successful when combined with a tobacco cessation program that includes support, discusses stress management, weight control, effects of social pressure and tips for resisting the temptation to light up again. Patients may discuss these with their family physicians after discharge.

For residents in a Long Term Care facility, access to NRT is available through the community pharmacy, paid for by the client/family.

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**Q. Can health region equipment be taken off the property when a patient goes off property to use tobacco product?**

**A.** While the waiver doesn't specifically discuss equipment, it's an issue that will have to be decided by the department managers or their designate on a case by case situation – just as it is now. If the client is attached to different pieces of equipment (IV pump, telemetry etc) that client will have to have a conversation with the nurse to determine a) can that equipment be safely run outside of the building (telemetry doesn't pick up much farther than the main doors); b) is the client in a physical position to leave the building based on the level of illness they are admitted with; c) maybe the equipment can be disconnected for the length of time the client would be out for their cigarette etc.

**Q. Why are Special Care Home residents allowed to continue smoking?**

**A.** Under the Tobacco Control Act, Long Term Care residents are permitted to smoke in designated smoking areas or in ventilated rooms, if available. This recognizes that tobacco is an addiction that is difficult to overcome for long addicted residents who now call a long term care facility "home".

There are several long-term care homes in the region that have already implemented a 100% smoke-free policy. Our policy prohibits the construction of any new/additional ventilated rooms. We will continue to educate residents about the dangers of tobacco use and smoking cessation services available.

Facilities with an approved ventilated tobacco use areas (for resident use only):

- Foam Lake Jubilee Home
- Kamsack and District Nursing Home
- Yorkton & District Nursing Home
- Ituna Pioneer Health Care Centre
- St. Paul Lutheran Home, Melville

The remaining facilities do not have ventilated indoor spaces for tobacco use by residents but may have designated outdoor areas (for resident use only).

**Q. Can visitors at Long Term Care Facilities smoke in the designated smoking locations?**

**A.** No. Visitors and employees of the health region are not permitted to smoke in any part of the long-term care building or on the grounds.

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### **Q. What if I use smokeless tobacco products such as chewing, spit tobacco or snus?**

**A.** The smoking policy applies to the use of all tobacco products including smokeless tobacco products. The use of spit tobacco (snuff/chewing tobacco) also represents a significant health risk and is not a safe substitute for smoking.

Here are some facts you and or your client should know about using spit tobacco:

- Spit tobacco is made from a mixture of tobacco, nicotine, abrasives, sweeteners and salts. It contains over 4,000 chemicals including 28 known carcinogens.
- Snus is a moist tobacco that is used under the upper lip and has the same negative attributes as spit tobacco.
- Nicotine is the main ingredient in spit tobacco and users become addicted just as they would to smoking cigarettes.
- Chew, dip or spit tobacco is as addictive and can be more addictive than cigarettes and is harmful to your health. The amount of nicotine in one dip or chew of spit tobacco can deliver up to five times the amount found in one cigarette.
- Spit tobacco users are 50 times more likely than non-users to contract cancers of the cheek, gums and inner surface of the lips. Spit tobacco can also cause cancers of the oesophagus, larynx, stomach, pancreas and prostate.
- Spit tobacco contributes to tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss, and users are at risk for heart disease, hypertension and heart attacks. (Source: Oral Health America 2001)

### **Q. I receive health care services in my home. Since this is my home, can't I smoke if I want?**

**A.** As an employer, the Sunrise Health Region has a responsibility to protect our employees from the harmful effects of exposure to second-hand smoke. We ask that when our employees are providing a service in your home that you refrain from smoking at least one hour prior to the visit and during the visit.

### **Access to Benefits and Services**

#### **Q. How can I access Nicotine Replacement Therapy?**

**A.** Patients/clients/residents can talk to their nurse or healthcare provider upon admission to any acute care or residential facility. These will be funded by the Health Region only for admissions in excess of 24 hours and for the duration of admission. Visitors can access nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) any time at their own expense in the community (please contact your local pharmacy or your

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physician). The patch, gum and inhaler are available for purchase over the counter from any pharmacy or retail outlet. It is advisable to consult with your physician or pharmacist prior to using NRT products. If you have health insurance, contact your provider about NRT coverage.

### **Q. What if my nurse or healthcare provider does not offer brief smoking cessation counselling in my acute care facility?**

**A.** Make your nurse or healthcare provider aware of your interest in quitting tobacco or accessing nicotine replacement therapy so that he/she can assist you.

You can also contact the Tobacco-free Helpline (306) 655-4685. For a list of online, phone or in-person resources available to you, please ask your health care provider or check the Sunrise Health Region website.

### **Q. How many times can I access Nicotine Replacement Therapy at the Region's expense?**

**A.** This service can be accessed on each occasion of admission to an acute care facility.

### **Q. I'm coming in for day surgery, can I still access free Nicotine Replacement Therapy?**

**A.** Access to free NRT is available for patients admitted to a facility for an overnight stay or longer. We encourage smokers who are coming for day surgery to refrain from smoking before and after surgery.

### **Q. If I am a healthcare patient or client, can my family access free Nicotine Replacement Therapy to better ensure my success upon returning home?**

**A.** Having the proper support systems in place is a crucial part of successfully quitting. Family members interested in quitting can access NRT at their own expense through local pharmacies.

Family members are also encouraged to contact their individual insurance providers about their NRT plans, if applicable.

Family members can also contact the Tobacco-free Helpline (306) 655-4685. For a list of online, phone or in person resources available to you, please ask your health care provider or check the Sunrise Health Region website.

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### **Concerns**

#### **Q. If I have concerns about the policy, who can I contact?**

**A.** If you have concerns, questions or comments about the policy, contact Jim Wallace, Director of Public Health (306-786-0636), or Dr. M. Nsungu, Medical Health Officer (306-786-0606).

Additional information can also be found on the Sunrise web-site, [www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca](http://www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca)

#### **Q. Isn't the Region concerned about the public image of having smokers congregating off property to smoke?**

**A.** People smoking along the property perimeters is not an ideal scenario. We are asking that people respect the tobacco-free policy of the health region. The health region has no control over what people do off of the health region property. This is a change and we want to make this transition as easy as possible. We feel prohibiting smoking on the property sends a stronger message about our commitment to health and wellness and our desire to support healthy lifestyle choices.

#### **Q. Isn't the Health Region discriminating against tobacco users with this policy?**

**A.** Legally, Sunrise Health Region has a right to decide whether or not to permit tobacco in its facilities and on its grounds. As a health-care organization, we have a responsibility to create and support policies and actions in the best interest of health for all people within the Region.

### **Tobacco use is the leading cause of death and preventable disease in this country.**

While smoking is legal, we are uncomfortable assisting people to engage in what we know to be unhealthy behaviour. We also recognize smoking and using tobacco products is a powerful addiction and that many people, if given the choice and proper support systems, would choose to be tobacco and smoke-free. This is why the Sunrise Health Region has created tobacco cessation options. We are interested in increasing the success rates for those interested in quitting. For those who choose to continue smoking, we are simply demonstrating our commitment to healthy living by creating a tobacco-free environment.

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### **Policy Implementation and Ongoing Monitoring**

#### **Q. Isn't outside pollution worse than tobacco smoke?**

**A.** This is a myth. Contrary to public perception, fine particulate matter pollution from cigarettes is actually 10 times higher than diesel vehicle exhaust. The particulate matter from smoking three cigarettes is equal to the exhaust emitted by a diesel vehicle that has been running for 30 minutes inside a garage.

#### **Q. What will be done with tobacco waste?**

**A.** We believe the elimination of cigarette waste sends a clear message about our desire for a tobacco-free environment. We will also remind tobacco users to be respectful of the environment and our neighbours in disposing of their tobacco waste.

#### **Q. How can I best support the policy?**

**A.** We all have a role to play in creating healthier communities. You can best support this policy by not using tobacco products as a lifestyle choice or by moving off health region grounds when using tobacco products.

We ask our employees to take an active role in making people aware by politely asking tobacco users if they are aware of the tobacco-free zone and to please move off the grounds when using tobacco.

You can also help by respecting that it may be difficult for addicted tobacco users to stop and by providing encouragement to those who choose to quit, while continuing to respect the right of the individual to choose if and when to quit.

### **Informational Resources**

#### **Q. Where can I get more information about the policy and tobacco cessation services?**

**A.** Please see our website [www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca](http://www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca) for a comprehensive list of resources. Call the Tobacco Free Helpline (306) 655-4685. Talk to your local pharmacist or family physician. A pamphlet, "Are You Thinking About Quitting Smoking or Other Tobacco Products?," is available (in English and French) by calling the Tobacco free Helpline (306) 655-4685 or by downloading from our website: [www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca](http://www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca) .



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### Smoking Cessation Resources

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##### In person

- **Your Health Care Provider**
- **Pharmacists**
- **Employee Health**
- **Employee Family Assistance Progra**

##### Speak with

- **Smokers' Helpline** 1-877-513-5333
- **The Lung Association** 1-888-566-LUNG (5864)
- **Saskatchewan Healthline** 811

##### On line

- **PACT** -(Partnership to Assist with Cessation of Tobacco) - [www.makeapact.ca](http://www.makeapact.ca)
- **Break it Off** - [www.breakitoff.ca](http://www.breakitoff.ca)
- **How to get Help** - <http://www.smokershelpline.ca/>
- **Health Canada e-quit** - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/tobac-tabac/index-eng.php>
- **Sask Healthline** - <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/healthline-online>
- **Heart and Stroke e-tools** - [http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iklQLcMWJtE/b.5374487/k.91C2/Health\\_eTools.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iklQLcMWJtE/b.5374487/k.91C2/Health_eTools.htm)
- **My last dip** - smokeless tobacco cessation tool with a program for youth aged 14-25- <http://mylastdip.com/>

##### Youth support

- **My last dip** - smokeless tobacco cessation tool with a program for youth aged 14-25- <http://mylastdip.com/>
- **Smoke stream** - everyone has an opinion- <http://www.smokestream.ca/>
- **Quit4life**- Health Canada's online smoking cessation tool for youth - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/tobac-tabac/youth-jeunes/life-vie/index-eng.php>
- **You thrive** - <http://youthrive.ca/need-help>

##### Aboriginal support

- **Tobacco wise** - <http://www.tobaccowise.com/>
- **First Nations & Inuit Health** - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/substan/tobac-tabac/index-eng.php>
- **Cancer Care Ontario** - <https://www.cancercare.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1377&pageId=9322>

##### Fact sheets & tool kits

- **Saskatchewan Prevention Institute** - reduce tobacco use resources
- **Canadian Cancer Society resources** - [tobaccofreeforlife.ca](http://tobaccofreeforlife.ca)
- **Tobacco and your health** - <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/smoking-and-your-health>
- **Tobacco Tool Kit** - <http://www.tobaccotoolkit.ca/>