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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since its enactment in 2004, the Government of Nunavut has relied heavily on voluntary compliance with the *Nunavut Tobacco Control Act* (TCA). The Chief Medical Officer of Health has expressed a need for a comprehensive tobacco enforcement program that would include enforcing the prohibition of tobacco sales to minors and creating more smoke free spaces. In order to achieve these goals, the Nunavut Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action (TRFA) was developed and released in 2011, paving the way towards a smoke-free Nunavut.

Presently, cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of morbidity and premature mortality in Nunavut. Estimates by Statistics Canada indicate that 62 percent of Inuit over the age of 12 years smoke daily [1]. Inuit-specific surveys conducted recently, however, revealed a higher rate than the data reported by Statistics Canada.

Tobacco addiction is one of the greatest threats to the health of Nunavummiut youth, and enforcing compliance with the *Tobacco Control Act* is a promising prevention method. This year, the GN has made significant progress towards achieving the goals outlined in the TRFA and initiated more than 75% of the activities described in the Framework. This report presents an overview of the activities and program interventions under the TCA for the 2014-15 fiscal year. Recommendations for future program development and initiative implementations are included.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TOBACCO CONTROL ACT**

The GN demonstrated its commitment to protecting the health of Nunavummiut when the *Nunavut Tobacco Control Act* was passed in May 2004. The TCA represents a significant benchmark in territory-wide tobacco control and its primary purposes include:

- To promote and protect the health and well-being of Nunavummiut by ensuring that public places and workplaces are smoke free; and
- To reduce access to tobacco products, especially to youth, through restrictions on the display and sale of tobacco products.

To support the TCA, a Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action was developed.

## **NUNAVUT TOBACCO EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE PROGRAM**

Fiscal year 2014/15 saw positive strides in driving the tobacco enforcement agenda forward with the hiring of a Tobacco Reduction Specialist to support the development of the Nunavut Tobacco Education and Compliance Program (TECP).

The TECP is an evidence-based, multi-faceted program designed to promote compliance by tobacco retailers under the TCA.

Some of the main functions of the TECP include:

- To implement and enforce the provisions of the *Nunavut Tobacco Control Act* that ban the sale and advertising of tobacco products to minors;
- To educate and provide tobacco vendors with the assistance and resources they need to comply with the requirements of the TCA;
- To apply a progressive enforcement model regarding non-compliance with the TCA; and
- To educate the public that it is illegal to provide tobacco to those under the age of 19.

As part of the TECP program development, an extensive tobacco enforcement consultation was undertaken and included over 300 informational interviews with GN staff, tobacco retailers, Health Canada Tobacco Enforcement Specialists, elders, parents, youth and key tobacco stakeholders from other jurisdictions. Interviews and community consultations were held in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Arviat. Key themes from the consultations included:

- The need to institute an extensive mass media campaign emphasizing that “it is illegal to sell or give tobacco to minors”;
- The need to develop training materials for tobacco retailers;
- The need to provide signage for smoke-free buffer zones;
- The need to identify Environmental Health Officers (EHO) as a key resource for enforcing requirements under the TCA; and
- The need to recommend the application of a continuum of progressive enforcement activities to help tobacco retailers achieve compliance under the TCA.

These consultations helped to inform the creation of the territory-wide Nunavut Tobacco Retailer Toolkit and the Nunavut Tobacco Policy and Procedural Manual. The Tobacco Retailer Toolkit has been designed to help retailers develop employee training and store policies regarding the sale and display of tobacco products. The Tobacco Policy and Procedural Manual supports program staff with clear roles, responsibilities and direction on how the Public Health

Division (including Health Protection and Population Health) should operationalize specific requirements identified within the TCA.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Ultimately, the success of tobacco control legislation is dependent on effective public education and progressive enforcement of the requirements under the TCA. Achieving measurable success with Nunavut's tobacco enforcement efforts will be demonstrated by retailer compliance and increased community awareness with the TCA. In line with the GN's objectives to ensure compliance with the TCA, the following activities will be undertaken in the next fiscal year:

- a) Tobacco retailer baseline surveys and information on previous and current territorial tobacco enforcement actions will be collected during the Evaluation of the Tobacco Reduction Framework for Action;
- b) Territory-wide training for EHOs will be undertaken with a Tobacco Enforcement Specialist in place;
- c) A monitoring framework and tool will be developed to aid EHOs in their work with tobacco retailers, and to assist with future evaluation of the program;
- d) Guidelines for addressing emerging challenges will be incorporated into the TECP to ensure consistent enforcement practices throughout Nunavut; and
- e) There will be a significant emphasis on developing good working relationships with tobacco retailers through close collaboration and ongoing communication.

Evidence from many jurisdictions supports the enforcement of tobacco control legislation as a method to improve tobacco retailer compliance and to decrease youth's access to tobacco products. Long term, this will work to decrease harm caused by tobacco use. Interventions that combine community participation, retailer education and strong enforcement have been found to be more effective in decreasing illegal sales to minors than retailer education alone [2]. The GN will continue to work with tobacco retailers to educate them on the requirements under the TCA. Additionally, mass media will be utilized for public education to prevent the sale and supply of tobacco to youth. Success can be realized through consistent and ongoing support for evidence-based tobacco control programming. This will help to ensure that tobacco-related diseases and premature mortality become a part of Nunavut's past and not its future.

## REFERENCES

1. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Inuit Health Survey Northern Contaminants Program (2014). Synopsis of Research B. Cigarette Smoking Habits page 6.
2. Feighery E, Altman DG, Shaffer G (1991). The effects of combining education and enforcement to reduce tobacco sales to minors. A study of four northern California communities. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 266(22):3168-3171.