

- News Release -

Calgary, Weedless Wednesday, January 21, 2004

HEATHER CROWE ASKS LABOUR MINISTERS TO BAN TOBACCO SMOKE FROM ALL WORKPLACES -- NO IFS, ANDS OR BUTTS!

Heather Crowe today called on all fourteen of Canada's Ministers responsible for occupational health and safety to ban smoking in all workplaces across Canada, with no exceptions. These federal, provincial and territorial Ministers will be holding their annual two-day meeting in Banff beginning tomorrow.

"I ask these Ministers to please ban tobacco smoke from all workplaces, with no exceptions," said Ms Crowe. "My time grows shorter every day, and I want to live to see the day when all workers are protected from secondhand smoke. I never smoked and nobody in my home smokes but I got lung cancer after forty years of waitressing in smoky restaurants in Toronto, Calgary and Ottawa. I want to be the last person to die of secondhand smoke at work," she concluded.

Action on Smoking & Health and the Lung Association have teamed up with Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada (PSC) to bring Ms Crowe to Alberta for National Non-Smoking Week. Ms Crowe now works as a volunteer for PSC.

"Even though Heather's request to speak to the conference of Ministers was declined, we will be going with her to Banff anyway to press the Ministers to get tobacco smoke out of all Canadian workplaces by this summer," said Les Hagen, Executive Director of Action on Smoking & Health. "Heather Crowe has terminal lung cancer and is dedicating her remaining time to improving the health of Canadian workers. But she cannot do it alone. To help Heather and to save lives, Ministers of Labour must give top priority making all workplaces smoke-free. While we are in Banff, we hope the Ministers will be able to assure us that they are working together to make 2004 the year when all Canadian workplaces will become smoke-free," Hagen added.

According to the latest information from Health Canada, secondhand smoke kills three Canadians per day. "Second-hand tobacco smoke in the workplace is the largest single unsolved occupational health and safety problem we have in Canada," said Neil Collishaw, Research Director of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada. Mr. Collishaw urged the Labour Ministers to, "Please help Heather. Please move quickly to ban tobacco smoke from all Canadian workplaces, with no exceptions."

"Our governments must take a leadership role in protecting the health of all workers by banning smoking in the workplace immediately" said Dan MacLennan, President of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. "Governments have been stalling on this issue for too long. How many Heather Crowes must die before workers are protected?" he emphasized.

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