



Physicians *for a* Smoke-Free Canada

1226 A Wellington Street ♦ Ottawa ♦ Ontario ♦ K1Y 3A1 ♦ www.smoke-free.ca
Tel: 1 613 233 4878 ♦ Fax: 1 613 233 7797 ♦ psc@smoke-free.ca

Board of Directors

President:

Atul Kapur, MD, FACEP,
FRCPC
Ottawa

Vice-Presidents:

Mark C. Taylor, MD,
M.Sc., FRCSC, FACS
Winnipeg

David Esdaile, MD,
CCFP
Ottawa

Secretary-Treasurer:

James Walker, MD,
FRCPC
Ottawa

Meri Bukowsky, MD
Kingston

David Copeland, MD
Montreal

David Davidson, MD
Ottawa

Andrew Pipe, MD
Ottawa

Staff:

Cynthia Callard
Neil Collishaw

Text of November 25, 2003 letter from Heather Crowe To all federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for occupational health and safety

November 25, 2003

One year ago, I wrote to you and all your federal, provincial and territorial colleagues, the Ministers responsible for workplace health and safety legislation in Canada. I asked you and all your colleagues to ban smoking in all workplaces in Canada.

In the last year, there has been some progress in this regard. Here are some highlights:

- Nunavut: The Legislative Assembly passed a law that will ban smoking in all Nunavut workplaces within two years.
- Northwest Territories and Nunavut: The Workers' Compensation Board that works for the governments of both territories has prepared draft regulations that would ban smoking in all workplaces in both territories.
- Manitoba: An all-party committee has recommended a province-wide ban on smoking in all workplaces, and, in the November 20 Throne Speech, the government promised to implement this recommendation.
- Ontario: In the November 20 Throne Speech the new government promised to make all workplaces in the province smoke-free within three years.
- British Columbia and Prince Edward Island ban smoking in most workplaces, but still permit designated smoking rooms that are separately ventilated.

On the other side of the ledger, there are discouraging signs:

- Even if six senior levels of government have done something tangible towards making their jurisdictions truly smoke-free, there has been no visible movement in this direction in the eight other jurisdictions. At the moment, not one of these fourteen jurisdictions has yet prohibited smoking in all workplaces.
- While governments vacillate, people are dying. Second-hand smoke killed at least one thousand more Canadians since I last wrote to you.
- I still have lung cancer from second-hand smoke at work. While my cancer is currently in remission, lung cancer is still a fatal and incurable disease. My prognosis remains poor.

In addition to the mounting death toll, there is now another urgent reason for you to act quickly to ban smoking in all jurisdictions. Canada's Parliament recently passed Bill C-45 to provide greater protection to workplace safety and health (See the enclosed fact sheet prepared by Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada). Now employers and managers are duty-bound, under the Criminal Code of Canada, to make sure that the workplace is safe and healthy. And that means making sure that every workplace is smoke-free. It is now even more urgent for you, the Minister responsible for workplace health and safety, to help employers live up to their legal duties by passing laws and regulations to ban smoking in all workplaces with no exceptions.

Last May, Neil Collishaw of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada and I had the honour of explaining to a meeting of the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation why we urgently need new laws and regulations to make all workplaces smoke-free. We would welcome the opportunity to make a brief presentation on the same subject to you and your colleagues at the January 22-23 2004 meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Labour.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H. Crowe". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the center of the page.

Heather Crowe,
Volunteer