

Activities Report—2000

MOVING FORWARD IN YEAR 2000

With many working on tobacco control, we were not sad to see the end of the 1990s. During that decade, we had witnessed many discouraging set-backs in tobacco control, including:

- The roll-back of taxes in 1994
- The striking down of the Tobacco Products Control Act
- An increase in youth smoking from 21% in 1990 to 28.5 by 1999
- Government support for continued tobacco-sponsorship of arts and sports.

In 2000, however, there were general improvements in a number of significant areas. Public attitudes towards the tobacco companies appeared to be hardening, and there was a ground-swell of support for increased funding to programs to reduce smoking. Health Canada created a new Tobacco Control Programme, which consolidated and increased its capacity to regulate the tobacco companies. Concrete achievements in Canada in 2000 included:

- Implementation of Tobacco Act restrictions on sponsorship promotion, including an end to billboards and retail signs
- Bold new health warnings
- Significant reductions in adult smoking (from 31% in 1990 to 24% in 2000)

This report chronicles some activities of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada during this turn-around year to allow our members and funders to review how we invested our time and their donations.

As we prepare for another busy year, we invite you to share your comments, concerns and advice. You can reach us through the coordinates below, or by calling our toll-free number (1-800-540-5418).

Mark C. Taylor, MD, FRCSC, FACS
President

Cynthia Callard
Executive Director

**PHYSICIANS
FOR A SMOKE-
FREE CANADA**

1226 A WELLINGTON
STREET
OTTAWA ONTARIO
K1Y 3A1
TEL: 233 4878
FAX: 233-7797
WWW.SMOKE-FREE.CA

TOBACCO INDUSTRY DOCUMENTS: PUTTING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

Since tobacco industry documents became available in late 1998, research in this area has become an increasingly important part of the work of PSC. Our goals in this work are to collect documents relevant to Canada, narrate the history of tobacco industry activities in Canada and improve public health by sharing that history with Canadians.

As Canadians explore their options of holding tobacco companies accountable for their actions (through civil, criminal or other legal actions), and as regulators explore ways of regulating the cigarette product, this document research will be increasingly important to public health.

◆ WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY FORUM

On May 31, 2000, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada hosted Canada's first in-depth seminar on tobacco industry documents. Over 70 researchers from governments, law officers and non-governmental organizations attended this full-day exposé of the research, political and business practices of Canada's tobacco companies.

(As a result of U.S. court cases, several million pages of tobacco industry documents were made available on web-sites and in document depositories in the United States and England. These documents became available late in 1998)..

Among the eight presenters was former tobacco-industry scientist, Dr. Jeffery Wigand (of "The Insider" fame). Colleagues from the United Kingdom and France presented results from their review of industry documents. The Minister of Health, the Hon. Allan Rock, also addressed Forum participants.

The papers presented during the Forum were preserved on PSC's document web-site (www.tobaccopapers.org). The web-site provides readers with the ability to quickly refer to the original documents .

This event was sponsored by Health Canada.

◆ CANADIAN TOBACCO RESEARCH INITIATIVE

In 2000, PSC's research director, Neil Collishaw, was awarded a three-year grant from the newly-established Canadian Tobacco Research Initiative.

This \$90,000 grant will allow PSC to launch a comprehensive effort to make millions of pages of tobacco industry documents available to researchers, policy makers and the public, and to extract from the documents important information about industry marketing strategies and scientific research.

An important part of the research program is the recruitment and engagement of Canadian university students and recent graduates in this effort. Among the first 'new talent' recruited by PSC is bio-chemistry graduate Michael Chaiton, health policy graduate Paul Steeves, and law student, Heidi Meldrum.

◆ MATINÉE CIGARETTES ON TRIAL

When Joseph Battaglia bought Matinee Extra Mild cigarettes, he thought they had less nicotine and would help him break his addiction to smoking. When he discovered that the low nicotine values on the side of the pack did not represent what he was actually inhaling, he felt he couldn't quit because he was still getting as much nicotine as he would have from his former brands.

This disturbed Joseph Battaglia so much that he launched a claim against Imperial Tobacco for the \$6,000 he had spent on Matinee cigarettes, the maximum claim allowable in small-claims court.

When Battaglia's case went to trial in November, 2000, his Lawyer, Douglas Lennox, called on PSC's research director, Neil Collishaw, as expert witness. Neil drew on his experience in

Health Canada and the World Health Organization, as well as his review of tobacco industry documents, to explain to the court how tobacco companies designed their cigarettes to give lower levels to smoking machines than smokers would inhale.

Neil's testimony took two days of a dramatic 7-day trial that also involved testimony from former head of IMASCO, Donald Brown, current president of Imperial Tobacco and Stuart Massey, head of Imperial Tobacco's research.

The judges ruling is expected in June, 2001.

THINKING GLOBALLY ...

Tobacco is increasingly a global issue, as the world's tobacco trade (including Canada's) is concentrated in the hands of a few multinational companies that are managed at a global level.

The role of international law in tobacco control is thus increasingly important. Through the World Health Organization, governments are negotiating a new tobacco treaty (the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). PSC is one of the most active NGOs in the development of this treaty, and was present during the first negotiation session (in October 2000).

Tobacco Control is vulnerable to international trade law (such as WTO agreements and NAFTA) if those laws do not protect policies and programs from commercial challenge. PSC received a grant from the Three Guineas Foundation (for \$9,000) to prepare an analysis of trade agreements and foreign policy options. This work was completed in 2000, and published this spring.

ACTING LOCALLY

PSC supports action in local communities by providing grants of up to \$1,000 to individuals and groups who are running effective activities, and by participating in strategic local campaigns.

During 2000, PSC invested just over \$10,000 in local projects. These included:

- a lecture by industry-insider Jeffrey Wigand in Winnipeg
- a campaign for by-law change in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- a lecture by second-hand smoke expert Jim Repace in Winnipeg, Manitoba

AND IMPACTING NATIONALLY!

At the end of December 2000, tobacco manufacturers began shipping cigarette packages with new health warnings. This was a moment of pride to many in the health community, who had worked collaboratively with government for almost two years to research, develop and implement the regulations which implemented the changes..

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada first approached the government with image-based health warnings in January 1999. At that point, Health Canada's proposal was for text-only warnings. This was not surprising — no other government had ever required full-colour images on cigarette packages.

To illustrate our ideas, PSC produced six prototype picture-and-text warnings (two are shown here) and submitted them to Health Canada in January 1999.

Together with our colleagues in the Canadian Cancer Society and the Non Smokers Rights Association, PSC lobbied strongly for these new health warnings. After reviewing the matter carefully (and conducting its own consumer and legal research),

When the Canadian Trade department chose to include tobacco farmers in its Team Canada mission to China (after we had met with them and written them to express concerns), we realized that there is a lot of work to be done before we have a foreign policy that consistently discourages tobacco use. The public response after we made this story public, however, is a strong sign that our concerns are shared with many Canadians. We continue to press this department for policy reform.

PSC worked with the Canadian Society of International Health to place two interns in developing countries through CIDA-funded youth programs. After spending several weeks in our office, Sue Lawrence joined Dr. Elif Dagli in Turkey, and Laila Tata worked with ASH Thailand.

- Testimony before the British Columbia Workers' Compensation Board hearings into work-place protection from second-hand smoke.
- Support to Ottawa University's Medical Students' outreach program to area high schools.

A request for a local-activities grant from PSC can be made by writing or calling our Ottawa office (613-233-4878).

Health Canada agreed with our suggestion. They engaged an advertising firm to further develop the image-based warnings.

The images developed by Health Canada are a clear improvement from those we presented to them in early 1999. Despite their rudimentary design, we know our first prototypes had a real impact.



Y2QUIT — SUPPORTING PHYSICIAN ACTION



Physicians play an important role in tobacco control beyond treating tobacco-caused disease. Their clinical and community activities can have dramatic effects on the number of smokers who are able to quit, on government policy and social attitudes, and on the protection of children from second-hand smoke.

To help identify physicians needs and to provide physicians with topical information on tobacco control, PSC entered into a collaboration with the College of Family Physicians, Health Canada, and the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control. GlaxoWellcome provided funding for the project, which was administered through PSC.

During 2000 the Y2Quit project achieved in:

- Identifying 2,000 Canadian physicians interested in tobacco issues.
- Sending posters, patient booklets and "chart-stickers" to almost 1,500 physicians.
- producing two issues of the Y2Quit newsletter, include it as an 'onsert' to the *Family Physician* and mailed to interested physicians.

Further activities in this initiative are planned for 2001.

THE BOTTOM LINE

PSC was in a sound financial position in 2000, chiefly due to generous contributions from its members, charitable foundations and Health Canada.

Foundation grants received in 2000 from the Canadian Tobacco Research Initiative (\$30,000) and the McConnell Foundation (\$10,000) were for programs whose expenses took place in both 2000 and 2001 fiscal years. As the 2001 portion of these grants were \$40,000, this payment schedule resulted in an apparent surplus.

WE MOVED!

Last year we could no longer deny that we had grown beyond the space we had leased from the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control for over six years.

With down-town real estate prices prohibitively high, we looked to less expensive accommodation near Tunney's Pasture. We found a very charming and inexpensive office in Hintonburg, just west of downtown Ottawa. The new space is large and flexible enough to

The pharmaceutical grant from GlaxoWellcome was to assist with the Y2Quit interagency collaboration, for which PSC served as an administrative home. This contribution is completely dedicated to the Y2Quit program and housed in a separate bank account.

We anticipate similar revenues for 2001.

Copies of our financial statements are available on our web-site (www.smoke-free.ca), or by calling us at (613) 230-4211

accommodate both our research materials and the students we have hired as part of our CTRI research project

The costs of moving were slightly over \$10,000. This one-time cost covered new furnishings, phone systems, computer network and other equipment.