

# Public Health COMMUNIQUE

September 11, 2018

## OPPORTUNITY

### Health Protection updates that will affect municipalities

**Please note the following important update regarding the Smoke-Free Ontario Act:**

The changes to the Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017 that were set to come into effect on July 1, 2018 have been paused to give the new government the opportunity to carefully review the new regulations related to vaping. The current provisions in the Smoke Free Ontario Act and the Electronic Cigarettes Act remain in effect and will continue to be enforced.

*Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA)*

Smoking is prohibited in public areas including:

- 20 meters around municipal sports fields and playgrounds
- Enclosed workplaces (including vehicles)

*E-Cigarette Act (ECA)*

It is illegal to sell or supply electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and component parts (e.g. battery, atomizer) to anyone under 19 years of age.

**Impact of update:**

- Current signage for the SFOA can continue to be used
- Municipalities can consider by-laws to further protect community members from second-hand smoke and vapour

Contact the Northwestern Health Unit office for information on by-law development around smoke/ vape free spaces.

**Resources:** (links)

For more information, please visit:

[Smoke Free Ontario Act](#)  
[Electronic Cigarette Act](#)

**Contact:**

Nancy Kovall, Tobacco Enforcement Officer  
807 468-3147 ext. 301230  
Email: [nkovall@nwhu.on.ca](mailto:nkovall@nwhu.on.ca)



**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

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### **Ontario has announced the Cannabis Retail Model**

The province recently announced that starting on October 17, consumers 19 and older will be able to purchase cannabis via an online retail platform provided by the Ontario Cannabis Store; this will be followed by a private retail model in April 2019.

The government will begin discussions with municipalities, Indigenous communities, law enforcement, public health advocates, businesses and consumer groups and representatives of the other provinces with private retail to ensure that Ontario's private retail model remains safe while helping to eliminate the illegal market.

Municipalities will be provided with a one-time window under which they can choose to opt-out of permitting physical cannabis retail stores within their boundaries. The provincial government will also provide \$40 million to municipalities over two years to help local governments keep their communities safe.

#### **Impact of update:**

- Municipalities can consider opting-out of permitting physical cannabis retail stores within their boundaries

Contact the Northwestern Health Unit office for information on cannabis retail and by-law development.

#### **Resources:** (links)

For more information, please visit:

[Cannabis Legalization](#)

#### **Contact:**

Stephanie Charles, Health Promoter

807 468-3147 ext.301250

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210 First Street North  
Kenora, ON P9N 2K4

September 11, 2018

Sent via email: [SMamakwa-QP@ndp.on.ca](mailto:SMamakwa-QP@ndp.on.ca)

Sol Mamakwa  
Member of Provincial Parliament  
Unit 104  
73 King Street, P.O. BOX 176  
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A1

Dear Mr. Mamakwa,

**RE: Pause in Implementation of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017**

The Board of Health for Northwestern Health Unit is joining other local public health agencies across the province in voicing our concern with the decision to delay implementation of the progressive *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 (SFOA 2017)*. We are urging that this decision be reconsidered immediately.

Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario, despite the decrease in smoking rates. This is of major concern in the Northwestern region, where the current smoking rate is 24%, which is higher than the provincial rate. This concern is amplified by the lack of accessible and available health care services in our large geographic area. These issues highlight a need for the health-protecting measures put forward in the SFOA 2017 legislation.

The proposed measures in the SFOA 2017 are in line with the modernized *Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy*. The SFOA 2017 will also take important steps toward reaching the federal goal of reducing the smoking rate to 5% by the year 2035. The Board of Health recognizes that a comprehensive strategy includes a regulatory framework that aligns vaping restrictions with those put in place on tobacco. Furthermore, a public health approach should be taken under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* to protect the public from the harmful health effects of cannabis as a result of its legalization. By delaying the implementation of the SFOA 2017, the provincial government unintentionally promotes the exposure of harmful products to the public. This thereby fails to protect Ontarians from the harms of second-hand smoke and vapour in public spaces.

The Northwestern Health Unit looks forward to working with the Ontario government to further protect Ontarians from the effects of tobacco, cannabis, and vapour. We urge the government to reconsider implementing the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* as planned and without delay so that residents of Northern Ontario and Ontarians as a whole are able to live, learn, work, and play in the healthiest environment possible.

Sincerely,

Paul Ryan, Chair  
NWHU Board of Health



Northwestern  
Health Unit

[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)

210 First Street North  
Kenora, ON P9N 2K4

September 11, 2018

Sent via email: [greg.rickford@pc.ola.org](mailto:greg.rickford@pc.ola.org)

Honourable Minister Greg Rickford  
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines  
Minister of Indigenous Affairs  
300 McClellan Avenue East Room  
Kenora, ON P9N 1A8

Dear Minister Rickford,

**RE: Pause in Implementation of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017**

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Paul Ryan, Chair  
NWHU Board of Health