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Canada's Toughest Smoke Free Legislation Introduced by Nova Scotia's Health Promotion Minister

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Canada's Toughest Smoke-free Legislation Introduced Nova Scotia Health Promotion

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Smoking will be banned in all indoor public areas, workplaces, and at outdoor eating and drinking establishments in Nova Scotia by Dec. 1, 2006.

Amendments to the Smoke-Free Places Act, introduced today, Oct. 13, by Health Promotion Minister Rodney MacDonald, will make Nova Scotia's legislation the toughest of its kind in Canada.

"The amended Smoke-Free Places Act will protect the health of Nova Scotians by limiting people's exposure to tobacco smoke," said Mr. MacDonald. "When smoking is unacceptable almost everywhere, including outdoor patios for eating, it helps smokers who want to quit. More importantly, research shows that youths and young adults are discouraged from starting to smoke if there are fewer people seen doing it in public."

Mr. MacDonald added that enforcement will be easier now that the same rules apply across the province.

"We are extremely pleased that the provincial government is introducing legislation to make public places and workplaces 100 per cent smoke free," said Dr. Rob Strang, president of Smoke Free Nova Scotia. "This legislation will decrease smoking rates and improve health in all communities across Nova Scotia."

Mr. MacDonald applauded the 11 municipalities that now have comprehensive smoking bans in place and each of the nine district health authorities that have banned smoking in all of their outdoor properties, including hospital parking lots.

Smoking rooms are still permitted in licensed nursing homes and licensed residential care facilities.

"These are people's homes and they have a right to smoke where they live," said Mr. MacDonald. "However, employees cannot smoke in the designated smoking rooms of these facilities."

This legislation is in response to the many Nova Scotians who have asked for a 100 per cent ban across the province. It is one part of the province's Tobacco Control Strategy. Since being introduced in 2001, smoking rates have declined from 30 per cent to 20 per cent. Other aspects of the strategy include taxation, community-based programs, cessation programs, youth prevention, media and public awareness, and evaluation.

A 2000 GPI Atlantic report, Cost of Tobacco Use in Nova Scotia, estimated that it costs \$170 million annually to treat smoking-related illness in Nova Scotia.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Smoking will be banned in indoor public areas, workplaces, and at all outdoor eating and drinking establishments in Nova Scotia by December 1st, 2006.

Health Promotion Minister Rodney MacDonald introduced amendments to the Smoke-Free Places Act today (October 13th) that will legislate the smoking ban.

Mr. MacDonald says the strengthened legislation will discourage youths and young adults from starting to smoke because it means there will be virtually no public places in the province where people will be seen smoking.

He says 11 municipalities and all nine district health authorities already have comprehensive smoking bans in place. But the provincial act takes that further by applying the ban to workplaces and outdoor patios for eating.

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