

Tobacco



The Issue

- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in Ontario. Provincial rates are the lowest they have ever been, but the rate of tobacco use in Algoma is not:¹
 - Ontario: 15%
 - Algoma: 30%
- In adults, tobacco use is responsible for cancers including lung, liver, and breast; heart disease; stroke; and respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma.² The death rate for lung cancer is much higher in Algoma, compared to Ontario:³
 - Ontario: 50/100,000 people
 - Algoma: 65/100,000 people
- Unborn babies, infants, and children who are exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke and/or use tobacco are at an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or developing asthma and/or middle ear disease.²



Return on Investment

- In Ontario, 13,000 people die each year due to tobacco-related disease; that's 36 lives every day.⁴ Municipal policies that address retail locations and densities help reduce product availability, which deters initiation/continued use, and produces a net benefit to communities as fewer residents suffer from tobacco-related disease.
- Municipal licensing fees that require annual payments from tobacco retailers provides both a revenue stream for municipalities, and positively impacts population health and safety by addressing product availability and retailer accountability.⁵
- Coordinated, local-level strategies help reduce health inequities related to tobacco, providing an opportunity for all residents to achieve and enjoy good health.



Policy options for Municipal Governments

- Implement **zoning restrictions** to create tobacco retail-free areas.⁵
 - Protect children and youth by prohibiting retailers within certain distances of schools and restricting retailer location to certain areas. This can reduce product availability and environmental cues for smoking.
- Implement **retail licenses** set at levels that would decrease retail density.⁵
 - Municipally-issued licenses can also help deter contraband sources who are in competition with legal retailers.
- Continue to support/implement **bylaws to restrict tobacco use and exposure**, beyond what is covered by the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.⁴
 - E.g., smoke-free beaches further protect families from exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Invest in **comprehensive strategies** that address tobacco prevention, protection, cessation, and enforcement.⁵
 - Coordinated, community efforts that simultaneously address the entire population (e.g., policies) while targeting vulnerable groups (e.g., youth) are key to optimizing impact.

Interested in building a healthy community? Contact Algoma Public Health at 705-942-4646 ext.3066 or info@algomapublichealth.com

References

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