

439 University Avenue
Suite 1850
Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8

Tel: (416) 367-3313
1-800-267-6817 (ON)
Fax: (416) 367-2844
E-mail: info@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

Honorary Patron
The Hon. David C. Onley
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

President
Sue Makin
E-mail: smakin@opha.on.ca

Executive Director
Siu Mee Cheng
E-mail: scheng@opha.on.ca

Constituent Societies
ANDSOOHA – Public Health
Nursing Management in Ontario

Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Supervisors of
Public Health Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public Health
Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses'
Initiatives Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario

Ontario Association of Public
Health Dentistry

Ontario Public Health Libraries
Association

*Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001*

Endorsement of Action on Smoking in Movies

OPHA has been advancing the voice of public health since 1949 and represents the public and community health workforce within Ontario. We are unique in that we represent eight other public and community health associations. We are active on a number of public health issues including injury prevention, healthy land-use planning and active transportation. We have a strong interest in public health issues related to older adults including the impact of environments, disease and injury prevention, public transportation and access to health promotion opportunities.

OPHA endorsed the following statement by the Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies:

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. Leaders in public health units, local boards of health, non-governmental organizations and health charities in Ontario have a history of speaking out in favour of actions to reduce the harmful impact of tobacco use.

Whereas tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability in Canada, accounting for the deaths of approximately 13,000 people in Ontario alone each year;¹

Whereas the tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use and particular brands on-screen, while obscuring its true purpose in doing so;²

Whereas adolescents watch more films than any other age group: movie-going is a universal experience and tobacco imagery in films is currently unavoidable;³

Whereas nearly 90 percent of tobacco impressions delivered to theatre audiences in Canada in 2009 were delivered by large US media conglomerates;³

Whereas Canadian movie rating systems classify more movies as 14A or PG that are rated R in the US resulting in 60% more tobacco imagery exposure by youth-rated films;³

Whereas exposure to smoking in movies is estimated to be responsible for 44% of youth uptake;⁴

Whereas an estimated 130,000 Canadian smokers aged 15-19 have been recruited to smoke by exposure to on-screen smoking, and 43,000 of them will eventually die of tobacco-caused diseases;³

Whereas the World Health Organization has advised all nations that have ratified the *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*, a global treaty obligating Parties including Canada to prevent youth smoking and end tobacco promotion through all channels, to give an adult rating to all new films that depict smoking, whether domestically produced or imported;⁵

Therefore be it resolved that the Ontario Public Health Association endorses the following policies to reduce the exposure of youth to smoking in movies:

- (1) Rate new movies with smoking "18A" in Ontario, with the sole exceptions being when the tobacco presentation clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or is necessary to represent smoking of a real historical figure.
- (2) Require producers to certify on-screen that no one involved in the production of the movie received anything of value in consideration for using or displaying tobacco.
- (3) Require strong anti-smoking ads to be shown before any movie with tobacco use at the distributor's expense, regardless of rating and distribution channel.
- (4) Require producers to stop identifying tobacco brands.
- (5) Require that films with tobacco imagery assigned a G, PG, or 14A rating be ineligible for federal and provincial film subsidies.

Signed:

Date:



Siu Mee Cheng
Executive Director, OPHA

February 28th, 2013

1 <http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/smoke-free/default.asp> Accessed August 17 2010

2 C Mekemson and SA Glantz, "How the tobacco industry built its relationship with Hollywood," *Tobacco Control* 2002; 11: i81-i91. KL Lum, JR Polansky, RK Jackler, et al., *Tobacco Control* 2008; 17: 313-323.

3 Polansky, J.. *Tobacco Vector: How American movies, Canadian film subsidies and provincial rating practices will kill 43,000 Canadian teen alive today- and what Canadian government can do about it.* Physicians for Smoke-Free Canada. July 2010. Accessed August 2010 www.smokefree.ca/pdf_1/2010/Tobaccovector.pdf

4 C Millett and SA Glantz, "Assigning an '18' rating to movies with tobacco imagery is essential to reduce youth smoking (editorial)," *Thorax* 2010; 65(5): 377-78

5 World Health Organization, *Smoke-free movies: From evidence to action*, 2009. Accessed April 2010 http://www.who.int/tobacco/smoke_free_movies/en/
Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies includes the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division; Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario; Non-Smokers' Rights Association/Smoking and Health Action Foundation; Ontario Lung Association; Ottawa Public Health exposé; Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada; Program Training and Consultation Centre Media Network; Smoke-Free Ontario Tobacco Control Area Networks

