

Quit Date 8/8/8



For immediate release: Friday, May 30, 2008

Media Release

York Central Hospital Announces Plans for Smoke Free Grounds on World No Tobacco Day

Richmond Hill, ON: Today, York Central Hospital is pleased to announce that all of its hospital grounds will become smoke-free as of August 8, 2008 naming the day “Quit Date 8-8-8”! The Hospital has chosen to announce its plans to coincide with World Health Organization’s “World No Tobacco Day” to emphasize the benefits of creating a more healthful environment and the importance of making healthy choices in the prevention of illness and pursuit of health.

Under current legislation, all hospitals have been smoke-free facilities with no smoking within nine metres of its entrances for a number of years. Following the lead of hospitals across the province such as Sunnybrook Health Science Centre, Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre, Credit Valley and Headwater Hospital in Orangeville who have already gone smoke-free across their entire grounds, **York Central Hospital is pleased to be taking a leadership position to become the first smoke-free hospital campus in York Region.**

“As a community health care provider, we have a responsibility to promote a healthy lifestyle and send a clear message to all of our staff, patients, visitors and the community, that prevention and making healthy choices is as important as the treatment of illness,” says Hospital President and CEO Bruce Harber.

According to Health Canada, approximately five million or 19 percent of Canadians continue to smoke. Every year, 37,000 Canadians die from tobacco use. Economically, smoking costs in Canada are over \$17 billion annually, including \$4.4 billion in direct health-care costs. Cigarette smoking continues to be the primary risk factor for three of the most common causes of death in Canada including lung cancer, ischemic heart disease and respiratory diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been proclaiming May 31 “World No Tobacco Day” since 1987 and this year it’s reaching out to young people. WHO’s campaign this year is *Tobacco-Free Youth* and according to WHO, most people start smoking before the age of 18. Almost a quarter of these individuals begin using tobacco before the age of ten and the younger children are more likely to become regular tobacco users and less likely to quit.

“We applaud York Central Hospital for planning to expand on the Smoke Free Ontario Act by becoming a completely smoke-free hospital campus,” says Nancy Brouillard, Unit Manager, Canadian Cancer Society, Major Mackenzie Unit. “The hospital’s strong leadership will further protect patients, their families, and staff from second hand smoke,” says Brouillard.

Hospital Embraces Comprehensive Approach

Members of York Central Hospital's healthcare team are working on a number of supports and information for patients and visitors who smoke. The Hospital is also offering a wide range of supports to staff that currently smoke and may wish to take this opportunity to seek information and assistance in helping them to quit. In total, York Central Hospital has embraced an extremely comprehensive approach in helping its patients, visitors and healthcare team make the transition to a healthier patient care environment and workplace.

On June 12, the hospital will be hosting a special education session with Dr. Robert Reid, Senior Health Promotion Consultant and Senior Research Associate Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute as well as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa. One of Canada's foremost smoking cessation experts, Dr. Reid will speak to physicians and staff on how best to medically support smokers while they receive care in hospital including the use of both counseling and medication to help alleviate nicotine withdrawal symptoms. The hospital will also be offering free Quit Kits to all patients and visitors interested in information and support materials on the effects of smoking as well as helpful tips on quitting.

For staff members who smoke, the hospital is offering free smoking cessation information displays, Lunch and Learn sessions, confidential telephone support and on-site group counseling. Free Quit Kits are also available for staff that smoke or have a member of their family who smokes and could benefit from the information and materials.

For information on smoking cessation, staff, patients and the public are encouraged to contact the Canadian Cancer Society's Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 or www.smokershelpline.ca Information and resources are also available from the Canadian Government at www.itscanadastime.com York Region Public Health offers smoking cessation information and free confidential counseling by calling the Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.york.ca/tobacco

About York Central Hospital

Located in the heart of one of Canada's fastest growing communities, York Central Hospital is a 437-bed acute care hospital that serves more than 400,000 residents in Southwest York Region. Phase One of its major expansion and renovation project will be completed in the spring of 2009. In addition to the new Family Birthing Centre that opened in 2007, Phase One will: triple the size of its Emergency and Diagnostic Imaging Departments, double the size of its Critical Care and Dialysis Units, and add 122 new inpatient beds.

Contacts: Melina Cormier
Director, Public Affairs
905-883-1212 Ext. 7492
mcormier@yorkcentral.on.ca

Stefanie Kreibe
External Relations Officer
905-883-1212 Ext.7484
skreibe@yorkcentral.on.ca

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Backgrounder

Smoking is the number one cause of lung cancer and second-hand smoke is number two. According to The Lung Association of Canada, tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, 40 of which are known cancer causing substances.

A Global Perspective from the World Health Organization

Tobacco use is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced with more than one billion smokers world-wide. Globally, the use of tobacco products is increasing and kills more than 5.4 million people a year - an average of one person every six seconds. Smoking also accounts for one in ten adult deaths worldwide. It is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of deaths in the world.

A Canadian Perspective from Health Canada

According to Health Canada, in 2002, tobacco use cost Canadians \$17 billion. The largest part, \$12.5 billion, was indirect costs for lost productivity due to illness and premature death, including \$10.5 billion for long-term disability. The direct costs attributed to tobacco use were estimated to be \$4.4 billion. The bulk of this was \$2.5 billion for acute care hospitalizations and \$1.4 billion for prescription drugs. The cost of acute care hospitalization translates to over 2.2 million days in-hospital due to tobacco, including 46,700 days attributed to exposure to secondhand smoke. In addition, the psychological and emotional costs incurred by the families of dead or dying smokers are incalculable.

Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Within 8 Hours:

- Carbon monoxide level in blood drops and oxygen level in blood increases

Within 48 Hours:

- Nerve endings may re-grow and ability to smell and taste enhances

2 Weeks to 3 Months:

- Circulation improves, walking becomes easier and lung function may increase up to 20 percent

1 Month to 9 Months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath may decrease over a number of weeks
- Potential for cilia to re-grow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucous, clean the lungs, and reduce infection

1 to 2 Years:

- The risk of heart disease is reduced by half
- Cervical and bladder cancer risk reduced compared to continuing smokers

5 to 15 Years:

- Lung cancer death rate for average smoker (one pack a day) decreases from 137 per 100,000 to 72 per 100,000
- stroke risk is reduced to that of someone who has never smoked
- Precancerous cells are replaced
- Risk of other cancers – such as those of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decrease
- After long-term quitting the risk of death from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is reduced compared to someone who continues to smoke

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