

AFL Joins Campaign for Province-Wide Smoking Ban

Worker Safety at Risk from Second-hand Smoke

EDMONTON, April 18 /CNW/ - The AFL joined with Action on Smoking and Health, Alberta Cancer Board and the Alberta Chamber of Commerce today to launch a campaign to urge the Alberta government to implement a province-wide smoking ban in all workplaces.

"For us smoking in the workplace is an occupational health and safety issue," says AFL President Gil McGowan. "Forcing workers in restaurants, bars and casinos to be exposed to high levels of second-hand smoke runs counter to basic health and safety practice."

"Tobacco smoke contains over 50 known carcinogens, including benzene, formaldehyde, cadmium and lead," observes McGowan. "If workers in bars were being exposed to coal dust at the levels they inhale second-hand smoke, the government would have put a stop to it. Had bingo workers been exposed to asbestos at these levels, the government would have cracked down."

"They need to act now to eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke." McGowan points out that food and beverage workers have three to six times more exposure to second hand smoke than other workers. As a result, non-smoking workers in the food service industry have a 50% greater risk of cancer than other non-smokers. "This is why we must act," urges McGowan.

"We will be mobilizing our members to contact their MLA in the next few weeks demanding a province-wide smoking ban," says McGowan. "We are one of only two provinces without one. Let's hope we don't end up being the last province without a complete ban."

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