

# campaign for a **smoke-free** alberta

**- NEWS RELEASE -**

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## **ALBERTANS RESOUNDINGLY APPROVE PROPOSED TOBACCO LEGISLATION**

### **Support Among Rural Albertans is Just as High as Urban Residents**

Today the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta and the Canadian Cancer Society released the results of a new Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between January 16 and 21 revealing that public support for provincial tobacco legislation is at an all-time high. The survey found very little difference in public support among residents in greater Edmonton, greater Calgary, and those living outside of these two metropolitan areas.

Four out of five Albertans sampled support a complete ban on smoking in workplaces and public establishments (80%) and a ban on tobacco sales in pharmacies (78%). Two-thirds of Albertans support a ban on retail tobacco displays or 'power walls' (67%). The responses from Albertans living outside of the Edmonton and Calgary metropolitan areas were 80% for smoke-free workplaces, 75% for tobacco-free pharmacies and 67% for a ban on tobacco power walls.

"Albertans have given the Stelmach government a green light to move forward on strong legislation to reduce tobacco use in Alberta" said Lorie Boychuk of the Canadian Cancer Society. "We have never seen such a strong public endorsement for these policy measures" she added. "If passed, the proposed legislation would have a significant impact on tobacco use and would help the government's objectives to improve the quality of Albertans and to increase the sustainability of the healthcare system".

Health and Wellness Minister Dave Hancock is reportedly developing a legislative package for the consideration of the Tory caucus in the weeks ahead. The coalition believes that the survey results demonstrate that Albertans are strongly behind the health minister on this initiative. "We are very pleased that the Minister is on side on this key health issue," said Tony Hudson, President of The Lung Association."

Currently, Alberta has the weakest tobacco laws in Canada and the province has an elevated smoking rate compared with the national average (21% of Albertans aged 15 and over smoke compared with 18% of Canadians aged 15 and over). Eight-thousand additional teens between the ages of 15 and 19 were smoking regularly between 2004 and 2005. Furthermore it appears that the Alberta government may be unable to meet its own tobacco reduction targets by 2011 without approving strong legislation.

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"How many more young people need to become tobacco industry customers before the government approves effective legislation?" questioned Les Hagen of Action on Smoking & Health. "These survey results demonstrate that Albertans are strongly behind tobacco legislation. We hope that the government will listen to the people and do the right thing".

Tobacco is the leading avoidable cause of premature death in Alberta, resulting in one in every five deaths in Alberta (3,400 premature deaths annually).

The telephone survey of 800 Albertans aged 18 and over has an error margin of plus or minus 3.5%

The Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta is a coalition of 15 health organizations working to reduce tobacco use.

- 30 -

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## IPSOS-REID SURVEY OF 800 ALBERTANS AGED 18 AND OVER

Conducted January 16-21, 2007 Margin of Error = +/- 3.5%

QUESTION	<b>RESULTS</b> (strongly/somewhat support)			
	Metro Calgary (n=275)	Metro Edmonton (n=262)	All Other (n=263)	Total (n=800)
1. To date, seven provinces and territories across Canada have banned smoking in all workplaces and public places. Do you support or oppose the Alberta government passing legislation to make all workplaces and public establishments completely smoke-free including bars, restaurants and gaming establishments?	79%	79%	80%	80%
2. The Alberta Pharmacists Association has called for a ban on tobacco sales in pharmacies to address the practice of health professionals selling and promoting tobacco. To date, six provinces in Canada have banned tobacco sales in pharmacies. Do you support or oppose the Alberta government passing legislation to prohibit tobacco sales in pharmacies and in stores that contain pharmacies?	80%	77%	75%	78%
3. Tobacco products are displayed for sale in many retail locations across the province, most commonly in convenience store locations. These displays can be found on the wall behind the cash register counter above the gum and candy products below. To date, seven provinces and territories have passed laws to ban such tobacco displays at retail locations. Do you support or oppose the Alberta government passing legislation to prohibit tobacco displays in retail stores?	68%	64%	67%	67%