



Annapolis Valley Health Position Statement: Tobacco and Healthy Communities

Annapolis Valley Health (AVH) has a responsibility to be a leader in health and advocate for healthy public policy change that can contribute to better health (AVH Population Health Policy Section: IV Board Governance Number: 2006). Stating our position on tobacco will support AVH to influence healthy public policy that will lead to better health and healthier communities. AVH has a rich history in tobacco control work. Staff, volunteers and physicians have worked together with community to envision healthier communities in which tobacco use is not the norm. AVH adopted a 100% tobacco free policy in 2003, highlighting a commitment to building healthier communities (AVH Smoking and Tobacco Use Policy: 150.010 – July 2003). AVH's position statements are based on the best current evidence. They will be reviewed and updated every three years.

Impact of tobacco use on our community

Tobacco continues to be a leading cause of preventable illness and death in Canada and specifically Nova Scotia (Reid, 2012). Tobacco also has an impact on the health of non-smokers who are exposed to second hand smoke, the majority of whom are children (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2011). There is a devastating economic impact related to tobacco use. The estimated cost of tobacco use in Nova Scotia was almost \$950 million in 2005, of which about \$170 million is in direct health care costs, with an additional close to \$760 million in indirect costs, such as lost work productivity and premature death (*Moving Toward a Tobacco Free Nova Scotia, Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy for Nova Scotia 2011*).

A comprehensive approach: Working together to build a solution

An effective healthy public policy approach to tobacco involves comprehensive, multi-pronged and multi-governmental strategies and interventions. Effective population-based strategies involve policies directed at restricting industry marketing and promotion, pricing, youth access, and smoking in public places. Healthy public policies initiated from all levels of government have played a key part in creating a culture in our community where tobacco use is increasingly not the norm (*The Winnable Battle, 2011*).

Moving Toward a Tobacco-Free Nova Scotia, the comprehensive tobacco control strategy for Nova Scotia, calls for collective action on tobacco use in Nova Scotia in order to address the devastating impact on families, communities, the economy and the social well-being of the province. The strategy outlines the key actions and directions as part of a broader, comprehensive effort to effectively continue to reduce tobacco use and its harms. These are necessary steps to improve the social, economic, and physical environments and resources within communities.

Annapolis Valley Health's Position on Tobacco and Healthy Communities

- AVH supports the Nova Scotia Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy.

Policy & Legislation

- AVH will continue to advocate for the strongest possible measures to ensure being tobacco and smoke free is the norm. AVH supports efforts that increase tobacco free areas including Smoke Free Outdoor Public Spaces, AVH Tobacco Free Property and Vehicles, and Smoke Free School Properties.
- AVH supports policy initiatives aimed at holding the tobacco industry accountable for death and disease caused by the consumption of their products by supporting the enforcement of tobacco regulation and legislation.
- AVH urges government to direct tobacco revenues to assist with helping people to stop using tobacco, prevent tobacco use and improve the overall health of communities.

Nicotine Treatment Support

- AVH supports evidence-based actions to enhance and expand the availability and accessibility of effective, comprehensive treatment options for tobacco users including vulnerable populations (i.e. youth, women, mental health consumers and Aboriginal communities).

Marketing, Access and Industry

- AVH reviews fundraising and advertising to ensure that they do not support the tobacco industry. AVH will not accept financial and material resources from the tobacco industry nor support events sponsored by the tobacco industry.
- AVH supports policies and action for policy change that exposes and restricts the tobacco industry in marketing their products, particularly those targeting youth.

Strategic Partnership

- Successful advocacy in healthy communities will be achieved through the formation of effective, collaborative, and sustainable community partnerships. Our work with our partners is guided by our advocacy framework. We will acknowledge and celebrate our partners and community leaders.
- AVH will support and participate in strategic partnerships and is committed to working with governments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, community partners and coalitions to advocate for healthy public policy related to tobacco.
- AVH works to create supportive environments and strengthen the ability of communities to take action to prevent and address tobacco-related issues.
- AVH will pay attention to the social determinants of health and will work to address the unique situations of those most vulnerable to tobacco use and its related harm.

Complete references available in the *Tobacco and Healthy Communities: Position Statement Supporting Document*.