



Canadian Council for Tobacco Control  
Conseil canadien pour le contrôle du tabac

## Communiqué

### National Non-Smoking Week (NNSW) 2012 – Breaking up is hard to do

This year the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control sought to highlight the complex relationship Canadians who smoke have with their cigarettes. Most of us have experienced a relationship that we knew was not good for us, but found it difficult to walk away. This is particularly true for the millions of Canadians who smoke – their “pal” is slowly killing them. Further, their addiction to and use of tobacco may also be doing the same thing to their loved ones.

Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of disease and death in Canada, killing 37,000 Canadians annually. Direct health care costs from tobacco exceed \$4.4 billion per year, and total economic costs are greater than \$17 billion per year.<sup>1</sup> For every premature death caused by tobacco, there are at least 20 people living with a tobacco-related illness.<sup>2</sup>

Research continues to show that comprehensive tobacco control programmes change smoking behaviour at the population level and alter social environmental factors that influence smoking. Such local, provincial and national tobacco control programmes are in peril without the renewal of a well-funded Federal Tobacco Control Strategy. The health crisis caused by tobacco products demands the continuation of a strong nation-wide response to prevent and reduce tobacco use and exposure.

### This is one relationship that demands regulation

A comprehensive tobacco control strategy should strive to achieve a smoke-free society in Canada by:

- Preventing people who do not smoke from beginning to smoke and becoming addicted to tobacco;
- Helping people quit smoking;
- Promoting the right of individuals to breathe air unpolluted by tobacco smoke;
- Unmasking the tobacco industry and its predatory marketing practices, and denormalizing tobacco products and their use;
- Ensuring the tobacco industry is regulated in a manner consistent with the chemical industry and other hazardous products; and
- Educating Canadians about the dangers of smoking.

### A relationship with cigarettes is costly

Five million Canadians smoke. Through tobacco taxation, they contribute billions of dollars annually to federal and provincial coffers. However we spend but a small fraction of that to help them quit this relationship. Further, as a society, we continue to stigmatize people who smoke and to blame them for their addiction conveniently neglecting the fact that tobacco is highly addictive and that most adults in Canada who currently smoke started before the age of 17 – many even before the age of 15.

We must do more to help create and invest in environments that support “quitters”, that protects non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke and that ensures our youth never enter into this devastating and costly relationship. Tobacco is a relationship that never has a happy ending.

## **NNSW - 35 Years Young**

NNSW has been observed for 35 years and is one of the longest running and most important events in the CCTC's ongoing public education efforts regarding the consequences of tobacco use. Its goals are:

- to educate Canadians about the dangers of smoking;
- to prevent people who do not smoke from beginning to smoke and becoming addicted to tobacco;
- to help people quit smoking;
- to promote the right of individuals to breathe air unpolluted by tobacco smoke;
- to denormalize the tobacco industry, tobacco industry marketing practices, tobacco products, and tobacco use; and
- to assist in the attainment of a smoke-free society in Canada.

## **NNSW Factsheets**

Factsheets will be available on the NNSW website.

For more information about NNSW please visit [nnsw.ca](http://nnsw.ca) or to learn more about the CCTC and its services please visit [cctc.ca](http://cctc.ca)

Pour obtenir la version française du présent communiqué, veuillez visiter [snsf.ca](http://snsf.ca)

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (2006), *The Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002*.

<sup>2</sup> J Mackay and M Erikson, *The Tobacco Atlas*, 2002.