

MAHC Promotes Cleaner Air with Smoke-Free Grounds Policy



(Monday, March 14, 2016, Muskoka, ON) – Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has set its sights on a cleaner, safer and healthier future for patients and visitors, staff and physicians, and all users of MAHC property. In accordance with new legislation under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, MAHC grounds will be 100% smoke-free effective June 1, 2016.

A smoke-free environment helps to create a healthier environment and encourages and supports both patients and families, and staff in making healthy choices. A smoke-free grounds policy means smoking and vaping will no longer be allowed on MAHC properties in Bracebridge and Huntsville, which also includes and impacts other agencies located on MAHC property, such as Algonquin Grace Hospice, One Kids Place and the Algonquin Family Health Team.

“There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke,” explains Natalie Bubela, Chief Executive Officer at MAHC. “Creating smoke-free grounds protects our community, supports those members of our community who are trying to quit smoking, and helps to prevent others, especially our youth, from starting to smoke.”

Smoke-free grounds are legislated at many public places and most recently on sports fields, and playgrounds. New legislation under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act now poses rules for hospitals that prohibit smoking on hospital property.

“We are not telling anyone whether or not to smoke, but we are advising where you can and cannot smoke,” says Bubela. “We understand this creates hardship for those who smoke and recognize that changing habits is never easy. MAHC is committed to help by supporting inpatients with Nicotine Replacement Therapy and providing staff with education and smoking cessation resources.”

Leading up to June 1, a Smoke-Free Grounds task force is developing the necessary policies and procedures, medical directives and protocols to support this change. To help educate the community about the upcoming smoke-free grounds, informational signage is being developed and will be posted at all entrances and exits. These signs will serve as a reminder to all staff, physicians, volunteers, patients and visitors for the next few months at which time they will be replaced with permanent signage.

All of the hospitals in North Simcoe Muskoka have gone smoke-free and MAHC is proud to be joining them in their effort to promote healthy smoke-free living.

Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) is a multi-site health care organization providing acute care services at the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge. Find out more about Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare by visiting www.mahc.ca.

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