

**Presentation to the Standing Policy Committee
on Community and Protective Services**

April 3, 2018

ASH is Western Canada's leading tobacco control organization and we have contributed to the quality of life in Alberta and Calgary since 1979.

We applaud the efforts of the City of Calgary to consult broadly on cannabis legalization and to engage the health sector in these discussions.

We are very pleased with the decision to combine tobacco and cannabis and smoking and vaping in one general bylaw although we have some concerns with the present draft.

Tobacco is by far the most addictive and deadly form of drug abuse in Calgary and it should not take a back seat to the regulation of a less harmful substance. In fact, tobacco kills at least 47 times more Canadians than cannabis according to the best available estimates.

From a public health perspective, almost any measure that can be justified to regulate cannabis can also be justified to regulate tobacco.

ASH has several concerns regarding cannabis legalization including:

- The potential "renormalization" of smoking in public areas.
- The combined or joint use of cannabis and tobacco.
- The potential for cannabis regulations to exceed tobacco regulations.

Regarding "renormalizing" smoking, ASH is very concerned about the public use of cannabis and its potential to increase the social acceptability of smoking. Smoking bans are a cornerstone of the overall effort to reduce tobacco use. As this Council knows, Calgary's smoking ban was over 20 years in the making and it required a Herculean effort to achieve. We cannot allow cannabis legalization to threaten or impair this enormous public health achievement.



Regarding joint use, about one-third of all joints are rolled with tobacco to improve the buzz and the burn according to cannabis smokers. People who use cannabis in this manner risk tobacco addiction and the resulting health consequences. In fact, the health risks of tobacco generally outweigh those of cannabis.

Regarding the possible over-regulation of cannabis, tobacco should not be overlooked in any legitimate discussion about controlling legal drugs. Tobacco is responsible for more disease, disability and premature death than all drugs combined according to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

We need to ensure that laws to control cannabis are balanced against laws to control tobacco and that the principals of fairness, equity and proportionality apply. Simply stated, tobacco regulation should not take a back seat to cannabis regulation.

Based on these concerns, we are urging City Council to extend its current restrictions on tobacco smoking and vaping to include all public recreation spaces that are accessible to children and youth. Specifically, we are calling for a ban on tobacco smoking and vaping in all parks and at all outdoor public events. This measure will ensure that restrictions on tobacco use are more aligned with the proposed restrictions on cannabis use. It will also send a strong and consistent message to young people about the dangers of smoking and vaping any drug.

To a five-year-old, smoking is smoking whether it involves cannabis, e-cigarettes, cigars or combustible cigarettes. Modelling is an essential component of childhood development and we need to model healthy behaviours if we want to raise healthy kids. For these reasons, the smoking and vaping of any substance should be prohibited in public areas that are frequented by children including parks and public events.

Calgarians are ready to support further restrictions on smoking in public. A 2016 poll of 400 Calgarians conducted by Ipsos Reid revealed that 88 percent of respondents supported a complete smoking ban in all outdoor public places frequented by youth.

City Council has amended the smoking bylaw several times since it was first approved in 1985. It's time to declare Calgary a "smoke-free city" and to make improving the health of our children and youth a top civic priority.

We are also urging City Council to close two significant loopholes in the city smoking bylaw including the allowance for indoor waterpipe smoking and the allowance for smoking in hotel and motel rooms.

Several Alberta municipalities have already banned smoking in hotel and motel rooms including Canmore, Airdrie and Stettler. Ten Alberta municipalities have banned waterpipe use including Red Deer, Wood Buffalo and St. Albert.

People who work in establishments that allow smoking do not secondclass lungs. All Calgarians deserve uniform protection from secondhand smoke at work. Secondhand smoke is secondhand smoke and there is very little difference in the toxicity of any burned organic material including tobacco, cannabis and shisha.

To summarize, we are making the following recommendations to Council:

1. Extend the ban on smoking and vaping to include all parks and outdoor public events.
2. Remove the loopholes for waterpipe smoking and for smoking in hotel and motel rooms.
3. Declare Calgary to be a smoke-free city and make the health of our children and youth a top priority.

Thank you for your time.

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