

Attention News Editors:

Ontario Should Act to Protect Children from Second-Hand Smoke

Children are still at risk for exposure to second-hand smoke in homes and cars.

TORONTO, Jan. 31 /CNW/ - Ontario's doctors are urging the provincial government to follow in the footsteps of the recent decision in Bangor, Maine to ban smoking in vehicles transporting children. The 2004 OMA report entitled "Exposure to second-hand smoke: are we protecting our kids?" revealed that children continue to be at risk as a result of exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) in homes and vehicles.

"A lot has been done to protect the public and workers from second-hand smoke in Ontario, but children continue to be exposed to the dangers of adult tobacco use," said Dr. David Bach, President of the Ontario Medical Association. "If other jurisdictions are willing to legislate this kind of health protection, so should we."

Numerous studies show that the impact of SHS on child health is significant. Among the risks are respiratory illnesses including asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood.

Research shows that vehicles can be a potent source of SHS, where levels of SHS can be 23 times more toxic than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space. Children experience higher internal exposure to SHS because of their high respiratory rates.

Ontario doctors applaud the provincial government's leadership in implementing a province-wide smoking ban; doctors feel that more must be done to increase awareness that adult tobacco use is also a child health problem.

"The longer we wait to take measures to protect Ontario children from second-hand smoke, the longer they will suffer from preventable illnesses," said Dr. Bach. "Let's expand on the leadership we've already shown in Ontario to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke so that the lives of children can be smoke-free too."

For more information on the OMA report "Exposure to second-hand smoke: Are we protecting our kids?" please visit our website at www.oma.org.

For further information: OMA Media Relations at (416) 340-2862 or toll free at 1-800-268-7215

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