

Tobacco control

Montréal's director of public health welcomes MUHC decision to become smoke free

Montreal, October 28, 2015. Beginning November 1, 2015 and starting with the Glen site, all McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) facilities will progressively become smoke-free and vape-free. Dr. Richard Massé, director of public health for Montréal, applauds the decision: “Last August, during consultations on Bill 44, *An Act to bolster tobacco control*, the directors of public health from all parts of the province asked that the Act include provisions to make health and social services facilities smoke-free. Therefore, I welcome this initiative of the MUHC, which shows leadership in providing protection against tobacco smoke and joins other smoke-free facilities in Montréal,” says Dr. Massé.

A smoke-free health and social services network

“The MUHC has proven that it’s possible, even for one of the largest university hospital centres in the province, to adopt such measures to protect the population against the harms caused by tobacco,” adds Dr. Massé. He notes that in its current form, Bill 44 still allows health facilities to reserve up to 40% of their rooms for smokers and to have designated smoking rooms.

New law and amendments expected

In their brief submitted to the health and social services commission, the directors of public health recommended that smoking rooms be banned from health network facilities and that only residential and long-term care centres be allowed to provide smoking rooms, under certain conditions. The directors also proposed that during the transition toward smoke-free environments, facilities set up smoking cessation support programs similar to the one introduced by the MUHC. A clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 44 should soon be on the agenda of the National Assembly’s health and social services commission and Montréal’s director of public health would like to see the Act pass before the end of the parliamentary session.

Tobacco control: A public health priority

In Québec, there are still about 1.4 million smokers. Half of them will die from diseases linked to active or passive smoking. Each year, tobacco smoke causes over 10,000 premature deaths in Québec. Smoking is also linked to many health problems at all stages of life: low birthweight, sudden infant death, respiratory and heart diseases, and many cancers. The direct and indirect costs associated with tobacco use are estimated to be almost \$4 billion a year in Québec.

Healthy public policies

The Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal is mandated to identify threats to people's health on the island of Montréal and to ensure that measures required to protect health are put in place. The Direction works toward adoption of policies that foster the health and well-being of the population.

To see the public health directors' brief presented last August to the National Assembly's health and social services commission:

http://publications.santemontreal.qc.ca/uploads/tx_asssmpublications/978-2-89673-498-6.pdf

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