



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Smoke-Free Ontario Marks 10 Years of Success  
Plain and Simple is the Key**

This year marks the 10 year anniversary of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which provides guidance and funding to countless tobacco control initiatives locally and across the province. “Thanks to Smoke-Free Ontario, smoked-filled workplaces, cigarettes openly displayed behind store counters, and smoking in restaurants are no longer the norm”, says Candace Rose-Smith, Health Promoter with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

The success of Smoke-Free Ontario lies in its comprehensive approach of legislative and regulatory change, enforcement, price increases, youth-led prevention, cessation supports, advertising to encourage quitting, and research to measure progress and evaluate what’s working. Activists, academics, non-profit and public health agencies together at the regional and provincial levels have aligned their efforts toward this shared goal.

“While Ontario has seen health gains through Smoke-Free Ontario, the job of tobacco control is not done,” says Dr. Kathryn Reducka, Acting Medical Officer of Health who indicated that tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable death in Ontario. The health unit will be sharing this message at the Pembroke Business Improvement Area’s upcoming Summer Medley Festival in downtown Pembroke on Saturday, June 25, 2016.

What health organizations want to see next, including the World Health Organization, is plain and standardized packaging that would prohibit all promotional features on all tobacco packaging, including colours, images, logos, slogans, distinctive fonts, and finishes. Only the brand name would be allowed. Many Canadians may not be aware of how much product promotion and marketing goes into pack design for cigarettes and other tobacco products. The tobacco industry is well aware of how valuable and effective the pack design is for both enticing new smokers and maintaining brand loyalty among current smokers. “It’s like they are mini-billboards for them,” says Candace. Currently tobacco companies are manipulating pack size, shape and colour in order to minimize the effectiveness of health warnings as well as to target particular consumer groups. Some cigarettes mimic the design of cosmetics and come in sleek, iridescent packages. Other packs feature fold out marketing materials or attractive internal packaging that encourage the user to discard the outside portion that contains vital health warnings.

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit supports Plain and Standardized Packaging. The practice of plain and standard packaging has been implemented in several other countries and is reflected in Canada’s commitment to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Just recently on World No Tobacco Day, the Federal Health Minister restated that Plain and Standardized Packaging is a top priority. Canada is ready to join other jurisdictions like Australia, the UK, France and Ireland in implementing plain and standardized packaging for tobacco products. Plain and standardized packaging is a key tobacco control measure. The sooner plain and standardized packaging is implemented, the sooner youth and public health in Canada will be better protected from the tobacco industry’s promotional inducements.

For more information, come and visit Pembroke’s Summer Medley Festival, look for banners around your community or visit [www.freezetheindustry.com](http://www.freezetheindustry.com).

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