

March 8, 2022

Ron Melnyk
By-Law Enforcement Coordinator
North Bay City Hall
200 McIntyre Street East
North Bay, ON P1B 8V6

Dear Ron Melnyk:

Re: Ban of hookah lounges/bars in the City of North Bay

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit supports the ban of hookah lounges/bars in the City of North Bay. Hookah lounges/bars should not be permitted at any establishment, including those that are licensed.

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, 2017 (SFOA) prohibits the use of a waterpipe (or a hookah) to smoke shisha that contains tobacco in enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places, as well as other designated places in Ontario. This includes bars, restaurants, and the outdoor patios of these establishments. The use of a waterpipe to smoke herbal shisha, however, is permitted under the SFOA (MOH, n.d.).

Public health concerns related to hookah lounges/bars include:

- Health risk to users and those exposed to second-hand smoke:
 - The use of waterpipes has been linked to multiple health outcomes including adverse respiratory health problems, acute and chronic cardiovascular effects, lung cancer, and other types of cancers (PHO, 2021).
 - Similar to cigarettes, smoking waterpipes during pregnancy has also been associated with lower birth weight, newborn and child respiratory problems, sudden infant death syndrome, and other numerous health challenges (PHO, 2021).
- Undermines the success of SFOA:
 - Hookah lounges/bars undermine the success of the SFOA by normalizing smoking in public places. The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey found that waterpipe use is higher among teens (ages 15-19) at 13% and young adults (ages 20-24) at 28% having ever tried a waterpipe (HC, 2012). Since hookah lounges/bars are not covered by the SFOA, there is no age restriction for entering an establishment or smoking hookah. The harm of smoking a waterpipe is often misunderstood and there is a misconception by youth (ages 18-24) that waterpipes are a healthier option to smoking cigarettes (TPH, 2014).

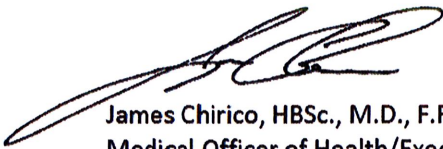
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- Air quality:
 - Non-tobacco products used in waterpipes have been shown to contain harmful toxins and chemicals such as particulate matter, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), carbon monoxide, and heavy metals. PAHs are carcinogenic and known to increase the risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease (PHO, 2021). Research also shows that toxins found in non-smoking sections of cafes were similar to restaurants where cigarettes are smoked, suggesting that separating smoking and non-smoking areas does not reduce the risk to patrons and employees (PHO, 2021).
- Compliance of tobacco-free shisha:
 - As shisha is not identified as a tobacco product in the federal *Tobacco Act*, it is very difficult to regulate. It does not require health warnings, consumer information, or toxic emission data required of other tobacco products (TPH, 2014). Tobacco Enforcement Officers are responsible to inspect places where tobacco and vaping are prohibited such as bars, restaurants, and patios. This may include taking samples of shisha to confirm compliance with the SFOA (MOH, n.d.).
- Infection control:
 - Waterpipes are typically smoked and shared in groups. This practice may lead to the spread of infectious pathogens due to improper cleaning between users. There is also evidence to support that contamination can occur not only on mouthpieces but also on other parts of the waterpipe that are cleaned less frequently and harder to clean effectively (PHO, 2021).

The SFOA provides numerous smoke-free spaces to protect individuals from second-hand smoke, and denormalizes smoking, however, by creating strong bylaws, municipalities can further ensure the safety of our youth, encourage people to quit smoking, and support those in the process of quitting. We continue to value the support of the City of North Bay in ensuring a healthy community.

Sincerely,



James Chirico, HBSc., M.D., F.R.C.P. (C), MPH
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer

References:

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