



**Abstract Title:** The role of the health professional in smoke-free housing policy

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## **Introduction/Background**

Smoke-free policy has been one of the most important contributors to the decline in Nova Scotian smoking rates, as well as policies targeting marketing, taxation and packaging. However, there are many multi-dwelling unit facilities in the province that allow smoking; thus, exposing residents to the harmful effects of smoke. Lower-income populations continue to have higher smoking rates and are more likely to live in housing communities that allow smoking. Applying smoke-free policies to community and co-operative housing may help address health inequities and continue to denormalize smoking.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this work is to support a local housing co-operative in their design and passing of a smoke-free policy.

## **Action**

The details of the policy process was captured through interviews of the two Mental Health and Addictions - Health Promoters directly involved in the policy work, and a Nova Scotia Health Authority consultant specializing in health policy. Health promoters within Mental Health and Addictions played an important role in various parts of the policy cycle. During agenda setting and policy formulation, the health promoters framed the policy issue as smoke, and promoted the inclusion of tobacco, cannabis and vape. Policy adoption was catalyzed by building supportive relationships with the housing co-operative leaders during the smoke-free policy vote. The health promoter answered questions and provided evidence-based information as questions arose.

## **Outcomes**

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the smoke-free places policy was approved by a majority of members to eliminate smoking in units, including vape, cannabis and tobacco smoke. The health professional interviews determined that when working with a community led policy it is important to assess the community readiness for policy adoption and to identify the community leaders who will champion the policy. The interviews also revealed the importance of storytelling during the voting procedure and the importance of policy tools for evaluation.

## **Conclusion**

Smoke-free housing policies are an emerging area of tobacco control that address health inequities. The Nova Scotia Health Authority can reduce multiple unhealthy exposures through facilitating smoke-free policy formulation at the institutional level.

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