

March 16, 2009

Peace Country health care properties to go smoke free

GRANDE PRAIRIE – Alberta Health Services is promoting a healthy, smoke-free environment outside all of its properties in the Peace Country region of the province.

Effective April 1, 2009, all Alberta Health Services health care properties in the Peace Country region are becoming entirely smoke-free. This means people will not be exposed to tobacco smoke outside the facilities in spaces such as internal sidewalks, parking lots and green areas.

“The goal of the policy is to not just create a smoke-free space on our properties but to support residents, patients, staff and physicians if they choose to reduce their tobacco consumption,” said Susan Hally, Population Health Manager for Alberta Health Services – Peace Country.

Education and training is being provided to help staff and physicians better support patients who are smokers. Provisions in the policy are also in place to meet the special needs of mental health patients and special consideration has been made for continuing care residents living in Alberta Health Services’ facilities.

Resources and support are also available to Alberta Health Services’ staff and physicians wanting to quit smoking. More information about the resources available to the public to reduce tobacco consumption is on Alberta Health Services – Peace Country website at www.pchr.ca.

The policy is modeled after similar smoke-free policies in place at various Alberta Health Service areas throughout the province.

Smoking is a leading cause of preventable illness, disability and death in Canada and accounts for at least 21 per cent of all deaths of Canadians age 35 years or older.

In Alberta it's estimated that 3,400 deaths a year can be attributed to cigarette smoking. The negative effects of tobacco use are not limited to smokers; they also place non-smokers at risk from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.5 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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