

Key Revisions: Tobacco and Smoke-Free Environments (TSFE) Policy

Policy Updates April 26, 2017

The major policy updates since the 2011 version of the policy include:

- Clarification that the policy covers “tobacco-like products” such as marijuana and e-cigarettes.
- The addition of third-hand smoke considerations.
- Changes to special considerations clause for patients.
- A new section specific to home care and home visits by AHS staff.
- Expansion of compliance to provide further explanation about the potential consequences for non-compliance with the policy.
- The addition of a “Statement of Principles” at the recommendation of Clinical Ethics.

Tobacco-like product

Means a product smoked or otherwise consumed in a manner similar to a tobacco product. Tobacco-like products include, but are not limited to, e-cigarettes or other electronic smoking/vaping products, hookah, marijuana that is administered by smoking or vaporizing, and any other substance that is smoked or vaped, but does not include any regulated Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products that are consumed in a manner similar to a tobacco product (e.g. an inhaler).

Third-hand Smoke

Individuals who leave AHS property to consume tobacco or tobacco-like products should, when reasonably possible, take efforts to protect patients, families, AHS representatives, and visitors from third-hand smoke exposure (e.g. hand/face washing, removing an outer layer of clothing).

Special Considerations

In rare instances, patients meeting specific criteria, may apply for special considerations for tobacco and tobacco-like product use by submitting an Application for Special Considerations as per the Special Considerations Guide.

Home Visits

- Patients, families, and others in a home receiving services by employees, or individuals acting on behalf of AHS, shall be requested to refrain from smoking tobacco or a tobacco-like product in the home two (2) hours prior to, and during, a home visit.
- If there is not compliance with section, alternative service options may be explored.

Compliance

- Enforcement of this Policy is a joint responsibility of AHS Leadership, Protective Services, and all other AHS representatives.
- Any person found using tobacco or tobacco-like products on AHS property contrary to this policy shall be notified of AHS' commitment to a tobacco and smoke free environment.
- Any person who continues to consume tobacco or tobacco like products on AHS property after verbal notification may be subject to penalty including, but not limited to:
 - fines or citations issued under the *Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act* (Alberta) and applicable municipal bylaws, when the consumption is in violation with their established limits;
 - citations under the *Trespass to Premises Act* (Alberta); and/or
 - disciplinary action in accordance with AHS' *Progressive Discipline* Procedure and applicable collective agreements.

Statement of Principles

Promoting the well-being of patients, families, AHS representatives, and the public

Tobacco consumption is the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and premature death in Alberta. The consumption of tobacco and tobacco-like products is also a threat to the health and well-being of Albertans. Enhancing the overall health and wellness, as well as limiting the suffering, of individual patients, families, visitors, and AHS representatives are important goals of the healthcare system. The AHS value of Safety includes the active promotion of safety and wellness for our communities and patients, and workplace safety and wellness for AHS representatives. To do this, AHS needs to ensure all AHS property are the healthiest environments they can be.

Avoiding harm

It is the job of AHS to protect people's health. Environments that are not completely vapour/smoke-free expose patients, families, visitors, and AHS representatives to second and third-hand smoke or other harmful by-products, both of which are harmful to health. Exposure to others using tobacco or tobacco-like products can be potentially harmful to a patient's recovery and to those who work in areas of exposure. Tobacco consumption also poses environmental harms to AHS property. Patients, families, AHS representatives, and the public should not be exposed to harm where it is reasonably avoidable.

Respecting autonomy & promoting patient-centred care

Tobacco consumption and nicotine addiction are complex health issues. It can be hard to go without a cigarette, particularly during stressful times when an individual or loved one may be in need of care. Individuals are responsible for making choices about their own health, including whether they wish to stop using tobacco or not. As AHS engages patients and families as full partners in their own care, individuals should be provided the opportunity to make choices about their own health and offered appropriate health information to be able to make such choices. To best support patients who consume tobacco while in care, appropriate NRT and medications are available, as are resources about the health risks of using tobacco. Patients choosing to quit tobacco consumption will be supported in doing so through the provision of appropriate NRT and medication (as medically appropriate), and referral to AlbertaQuits cessation services.

Promoting fairness

Individuals should not be unfairly burdened with the consequences of circumstances over which they have little control. Tobacco-free environments help protect those patients, visitors and AHS representatives who do not wish to expose themselves to smoke or other by-products, who have quit, or who are trying to quit as seeing people smoking or vaping (e.g. e-cigarettes) can be harmful to those recovering.