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WINNIPEG HEALTH REGION CELEBRATES WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

***All facilities and grounds are Smoke-Free;
City's Outdoor Smoking Ban in effect.***

The Winnipeg Health Region celebrates World No Tobacco Day by reminding the public that WRHA health care facility and workplace grounds and entrances are smoke-free, especially now that City Hall has passed its outdoor smoking ban.

"As an organization that cares for the health and wellbeing of individuals, it is our duty to protect people from the dangers of tobacco smoke," said CEO Arlene Wilgosh. "We all know smoking is bad for you. We don't want you to smoke at all, but if you do, please respect the health of others by moving away from our entrances and property."

"If you are in hospital, we can support you to be comfortable not smoking for the benefit of your own recovery as well as the health of others."

"Smoke actually impairs the body's ability to heal," said WRHA Medical Officer of Health Dr. Sande Harlos. "The harmful effect of smoking is well documented, but its impacts are magnified during an illness or recovery. Smoking constricts blood vessels, which can impact blood flow and the delivery of medication and oxygen to affected parts of the body."

People who are found smoking on or near WRHA property will be asked to move off the grounds to finish their cigarettes. While cooperation is expected, beginning in July, a Notice of Enforcement will be issued to people smoking where prohibited. Effective immediately, smokers may also be issued tickets and fined by City of Winnipeg By-law Officers.

Staff and volunteers will be handing out "We're Smoke-Free!" cards to people who come to sites across the Region today. The cards encourage people who would like to quit smoking to contact Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 or www.smokershelpline.ca.

"Creating a healthy, smoke-free environment around our health facilities and offices just makes sense," said Wilgosh. "It's not only the right thing to do, it's a commitment we are proud to make."

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