

Sport and Recreation Groups Encouraged to go Tobacco-Free

Nova Scotia Health Promotion (to Feb.23, 2006)

July 8, 2005 14:31

Sport and recreation events just got healthier. The Tobacco-Free Youth Sport and Recreation Initiative was launched today, July 8, to encourage all groups to provide a tobacco-free environment for sport and recreation events.

The launch was held at the Gunn Baldursson Memorial Women's Soccer Tournament in Wolfville.

"We are proud to be part of another important tobacco reduction initiative, especially one geared toward children and youth," said MLA Mark Parent, who attended the launch on behalf of Health Promotion Minister Rodney MacDonald. "The most impressive part of this initiative is the overwhelming support of so many partners who worked long and hard to make this a success, and we thank them."

The initiative encourages and provides support for community groups to develop and implement tobacco-free policies in sport and recreation. Funding is available to help support groups promote their tobacco-free policies and can be used to purchase banners, develop promotional material, or have tobacco-free logos printed on team uniforms.

The initiative started with the Cole Harbour Soccer Club. The club launched its 2003 soccer season completely tobacco-free with a policy that applies to players, coaches, referees, parents and spectators. A "tobacco-free" logo was placed on all players' uniforms and additional signage was used throughout the season.

"Our volunteer coaches are very supportive of the program," said Elizabeth Singer, administrator of the Cole Harbour Soccer Club. "Many of them are parents who want their children to receive strong messages that tobacco use and smoking is not part of a healthy lifestyle and soccer is all about healthy active living."

She said that by making soccer tobacco-free the club is a positive healthy role model for all players.

The Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation program was developed in co-operation with a number of partners including Action in Your Community Against Tobacco; Canadian Cancer Society, Nova Scotia Division; Cancer Care Nova Scotia; Capital Health; and Nova Scotia Health Promotion.

"This is a great example of how success at the community level can be used as a basis to learn and then expand across the province," said Mr. Parent. "The innovative work of the Cole Harbour Soccer Club demonstrates that everyone has a role to play in the battle against tobacco."

The Tobacco-Free Youth Sport and Recreation initiative is one component of Nova Scotia Health Promotion's tobacco control strategy. Since the strategy was implemented smoking rates have dropped from 30 to 22 per cent.

For more information on the Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation initiative see the website at www.hpclearinghouse.ca/act .

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Sport and recreation groups across the province are being encouraged to go tobacco-free.

Today (July 8th), Nova Scotia Health Promotion and its partners launched the Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation initiative at the Gunn Baldursson Memorial Women's Soccer Tournament in Wolfville.

The initiative provides supports and resources to community and provincial sport and recreation groups that develop their own tobacco-free policies.

The initiative provides a how-to-guide to help groups develop their own tobacco-free policy as well as funding for tobacco-free banners, promotional material and the use of a "tobacco-free" logo on team uniforms.

M-L-A Mark Parent, on behalf of Health Promotion Minister Rodney MacDonald, says the initiative supports parents who want their children to receive strong messages that tobacco use and smoking are not part of a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about the Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation Initiative visit the website at [W-W-W dot H-P clearinghouse dot C-A slash act](http://www.hpclearinghouse.ca/act).

-30-

Contact: Lucas Wide
Health Promotion
902-424-7558
E-mail widela@gov.ns.ca