

July 1, 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

MHA becomes Smoke-Free

(Strathroy & Newbury, ON) –

Middlesex Hospital Alliance – Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital and Four Counties Health Services will become 100% smoke-free effective July 11, 2016.

Regulations filed by the provincial government under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, effective January 1, 2016, bans smoking on all hospital grounds in Ontario, unless designated smoking areas are identified on the premises. MHA elected to designate temporary smoking areas for six months, to afford the opportunity to provide education and support in the transition to a smoke-free workplace. Effective July 11, 2016, there will no longer be a “designated” smoking area anywhere on hospital grounds at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) or Four Counties Health Services (FCHS). This means that smoking and vaping will not be allowed anywhere on our property, grounds, parking areas or vehicles.

When it comes to the effects of smoking, no organization should be more aware of the perils associated with second hand smoke than the Middlesex Hospital Alliance. In the spirit of the “Smoke-Free Ontario” legislation, we, as an organization, continue to improve the health of our constituents by becoming smoke-free in our buildings and on our properties. Smoke-free grounds are legislated at many public places and most recently on sports fields, and playgrounds. New legislation under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act now poses rules for hospitals that prohibit smoking on hospital property.

“As a leading healthcare provider, it is essential for the Alliance to take a leading role in protecting anyone who comes to our sites from the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Going smoke-free, I believe, sends a clear message to our communities that prevention is as important as treatment of illness and that we, at the Middlesex Hospital Alliance, are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone,” stated T. Stepanuik, MHA President & CEO. “This action clearly demonstrates our commitment to health promotion and disease prevention,” he added.

Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in Canada, causing 40,000 premature deaths each year.

External signage and internal posters will be installed at both locations to reinforce that MHA is now smoke-free.

Patients who come to our hospitals after July 11, 2016 will be asked to refrain from smoking during their hospital stay. Understandably, if you are a smoker, it may be challenging for you to adjust to this

For more information contact:

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or visit our website:
www.mhalliance.on.ca

Four Counties Health Services site

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Newbury ON N0L 1Z0
519 693-4441

Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital site

395 Carrie Street
Strathroy ON N7G 3J4
519 245-1550

www.mhalliance.on.ca

change. However, your health care team is here to support you to manage and to help you get through a smoke-free hospital stay easier. They can also help you quit smoking altogether. Patients who are admitted to either site and need help remaining smoke-free have access to a variety of free smoking cessation supports.

MHA thanks all patients and visitors for helping us maintain a healthy environment by refraining from smoking anywhere on hospital property effective July 11, including staff and visitor parking lots.

For tools to help you quit smoking,
visit www.smokershelpline.ca or call 1-877-513-5333.

About MHA:

The Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) is comprised of two fully-accredited partner sites: Four Counties Health Services and Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital.

A progressive, team-oriented and technologically adept organization of excellence, the MHA is creating a more integrated and seamless approach to treatment by embracing and seeking out partnerships, through collaboration and investing in people. This coordinated approach helps to ensure that a high level of service is provided while reducing costs and continually enhancing quality.