



OTRU Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team Update

Welcome to the third in our series of four 2014-2015 newsletters from OTRU's Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team! We are excited to be sharing information about our activities and progress this year.

Current Projects

Since April 1, 2014, OTRU has received 59 evaluation and knowledge needs requests from across the province (Table 1). Forty-two requests have been from Tobacco Control Area Networks (TCANs) or Public Health Units (PHUs), seventeen requests have come from other stakeholders, seven of which were raised by OTRU's Knowledge Exchange Advisory Group at their 2014 meeting.

Table 1: Current Evaluation and Knowledge Needs Requests (April – December 2014)

Requesting Organization	# of Requests
All TCANs	2
South West TCAN	6
Elgin St. Thomas PHU	1
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit	1
Central West TCAN	3
Halton PHU	1
Niagara PHU	1
Central East TCAN	3
Peel PHU	2
Peterborough County-City Health Unit	1
York PHU	1
Toronto TCAN	4
East TCAN	5
Ottawa PHU	1
Prince Edward Hastings County Health Unit	1
North East TCAN	3
Algoma PHU	1
North West TCAN	3
Thunder Bay PHU	2
Canadian Cancer Society	1
Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies	2
Ontario Lung Association	3
Smoking and Health Action Foundation	4
Smoke-Free Niagara	1
KEAG	7



The team classifies requests by their complexity and the amount of time taken to complete them. Since April 1, 2014, we have received 20 brief requests, 26 moderate requests and 13 intensive requests that can take a month or more to complete.

Looking Ahead!

From September to November 2014, OTRU's Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team joined each of the seven TCANs at one of their monthly meetings. As a result of these meetings, a number of exciting new requests are flagged for 2015. Topic areas include:

- Local Cessation Gaps Analysis
- Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Dwellings
- Smoke-Free Movies
- Youth Engagement
- Thirdhand Smoke

If your organization is planning to work on any of these areas and are interested in receiving evaluation support, please contact us!

Recent Requests

OTRU's Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team receives requests across all three pillars in tobacco control. Below we provide summaries of selected requests that have recently been addressed by our Team.

Evaluation of the Essex Region Conservation Area Smoke-free Policy

In November 2013, the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) passed a policy to protect conservation area users from second-hand smoke (SHS) in outdoor spaces at conservation areas. It was the first conservation area to implement such a policy in Ontario. The policy prohibits smoking throughout conservation areas with the exception of parking lots, rented hunting blinds and campsites. ERCA Administration decided to phase-in implementation of the policy starting with three high use locations. Implementation of the policy began on April 1, 2014 at Holiday Beach, John R. Park Homestead, and Hillman Marsh and will expand to the remaining conservation areas in 2015.

During phase one, policy implementation activities included: public education (e.g., media launch, website update, promotional material distribution), the placement of signage around the conservation areas and policy enforcement. Enforcement activities included: tailored tobacco enforcement staff training, communication with conservation area users who were in violation of the policy and monitoring of the Park Watch call line for complaints.



EVALUATION NEWS

OTRU worked with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) and ERCA to implement a mixed methods evaluation of the first phase of policy implementation. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess:

- implementation and enforcement
- effectiveness at restricting smoking and protecting the public from SHS exposure in the outdoor spaces affected by the policy
- impacts on the use of outdoor spaces
- impacts on smoking behavior

The first measurement occurred at the early stages of implementation and is not a pre-policy baseline. Specific methods included: a street intercept survey of smokers and non-smokers, cigarette butt litter analysis, analysis of administrative data and key informant interviews. Two data interpretation meetings were also held with WECHU and ERCA staff who coordinated the street intercept survey and cigarette butt litter collection.

Overall, data collected during the first phase of the evaluation suggests that the implementation of ERCA's smoke-free outdoor spaces policy has been effective at restricting smoking and protecting the public from SHS exposure in the outdoor conservation area spaces affected by the policy. Over one-third (36%) of respondents said that the policy will make them more likely to use conservation areas in the future. The majority of respondents (69%) reported never being exposed to SHS when visiting a conservation area.

Administrative data and data from the key informant interviews suggest that the implementation and enforcement of the policy has been a smooth process that has not resulted in any significant compliance issues or significant impact to ERCA staff workloads. Although data from the cigarette butt litter analysis also suggests that there are no issues with compliance at Hillman Marsh and John R. Park Homestead, the high number of cigarette butts recorded at Holiday Beach, along with key informant data, suggests that compliance is an issue at that location. Specifically, one key informant commented that the cigarette butt count helped them to identify a problem at Holiday Beach and that this information will help them to focus their efforts through targeted education to campers in the future.

In spring 2015, the second phase of the evaluation will take place with another round of street intercept interviews and cigarette butt litter analyses. A final report is planned for March 2016.

To find out more, please contact: Emily Di Sante at emily.disante@camh.ca

Tobacco Smoke in Multi-Unit Dwellings

Although the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* protects many Ontarians from exposure to SHS in enclosed public places and workplaces including restaurants and bars, casinos, in vehicles, and in the common areas of multi-unit dwellings (MUDs), exposure still occurs in MUDs through drifting smoke from neighbouring



EVALUATION NEWS

dwellings, shared indoor spaces, common ventilation systems, and through windows and doors. Increased public awareness of the hazards of second and third hand smoke exposure and development and implementation of smoke-free housing policies will help to protect the health of Ontarians living in multi-unit dwellings.

In our previous newsletter, we noted that some local jurisdictions are moving beyond measures in the provincial legislation to protect those living in MUDs from harmful exposure to tobacco smoke, particularly those residents of social/non-profit housing.¹

Since then, OTRU has continued to address requests related to SHS exposure in MUDs. OTRU helped the South West TCAN to evaluate their Smoke-free MUDs packages that inform landlords of the benefits of smoke-free policies, policy options and resources. OTRU is also providing evaluation help by providing survey and question guides to PHUs that are exploring work with MUDs.

OTRU assisted the Eastern TCAN in designing and implementing an opinion survey to gain an understanding of young adults' awareness of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke in multi-unit dwellings. This was an extension of a survey that was conducted in Ottawa Public Health last year. The TCAN-wide needs assessment survey was conducted in October 2014. A total of 722 electronic surveys were conducted in-person with young adults who are between the ages of 18 and 24, currently living in, or planning to live in a multi-unit dwelling such as an apartment or condominium in the next 12 months. The survey explored:

- the awareness of young adults about smoking and secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit dwellings
- the knowledge of young adults about secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit dwelling
- young adults level of exposure to SHS in multi-unit dwellings
- young adults attitudes and expectations about smoking indoors

Results will be available in spring 2015.

Many TCANs and PHUs have included tobacco control work with MUDs in their 2015 work plans. If your organization would like evaluation help related to MUDs, please contact OTRU.

OTRU recently released the update *Tobacco Smoke Entering Homes in Multi-Unit Dwellings in Ontario*. The update reviews the extent of reported exposure to SHS in multi-unit dwellings and notes regional differences among the province's seven Tobacco Control Area Networks (TCANs).

¹ Smoke Free Housing Ontario. Ontario Community/Non-Profit Housing Providers with No-Smoking Policies. Available at: http://www.smokefreehousingon.ca/hsfo/file/files/Community_Housing_May_29_2014.pdf. Accessed July 29, 2014.



Looking for Help?

If you would like to discuss your support needs further, please complete our [Knowledge and Evaluation Support Request Form](#) online or contact our team members:



Robert Schwartz, PhD
Project Lead
416-978-3901
robert.schwartz@utoronto.ca



Shawn O'Connor, PhD
Project Lead
416-978-0418
shawn.oconnor@camh.ca



Emily Di Sante, MA
Project Coordinator
416-978-6931
emily.disante@utoronto.ca