

- A Tobacco Free Detox Unit - It Can Happen. It Should Happen. It Has Happened.

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Traditionally, tobacco using rates for those accessing inpatient addiction treatment units are significantly higher than the general public.

“At admission to the inpatient addictions program, 75% were current and 8% former cigarette smokers, 3% were current cigar or pipe smokers, and 2% were current users of smokeless tobacco.”¹

“Persons with drug and alcohol abuse problems are three times as likely to be smokers compared to non-abusers. Most substance abusers tend to be heavy smokers: they smoke more cigarettes per day, choose higher nicotine brands, and are more nicotine dependent”²

When Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services in the Capital Health District (pop 390,000) announced they were closing the “smoke room” in their detox unit on Dec 31, 2002 and implementing a 100% tobacco free policy many thought it would be the beginning of the end for the service. “No one will come if they can’t smoke and if they do, no one will stay if they can’t smoke” was a common belief.

This belief proved to be unfounded. People still came for service and they stayed for treatment.

Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services undertook a detailed case file review which demonstrated that the rate of self referral and length of stay in the detox unit was not significantly different in the 12 months post policy when compared to the 12 months pre policy.

A 100% tobacco free environment protects staff and patients from the known harm of tobacco smoke. It provides some patients with their first “break” from tobacco use in many years. This inspires a confidence in some that living tobacco free is a goal that can be achieved. A 100% tobacco free policy is not a barrier to service.

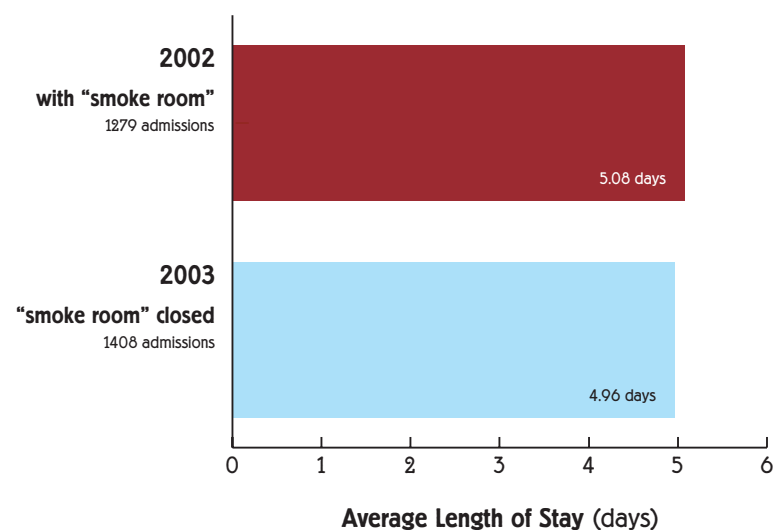
Careful planning, effective nicotine withdrawal maintenance protocols, staff training and “buy in” as well as raising the awareness of tobacco as an addiction throughout all of our services lead to a successful implementation of the 100% tobacco free policy.

Withdrawal Maintenance Unit (Detox)

Admissions and Length of Stay for 2002 and 2003

Dec. 31, 2002 the Detox Unit closed the “smoke room” and implemented a 100% tobacco free environment

2687 Total files reviewed



¹. JAMA. 1996 Apr 10;275(14):1097-103.
Mortality following inpatient addictions treatment. Role of tobacco use in a community-based cohort.

². J Subst Abuse Treat. 2003 Jan;24(1):59-65.
Survey of smoking cessation services in Canadian addiction programs



Capital Health
Addiction Prevention
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