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## Trends in Public Support for Smoke-Free Workplaces, Restaurants and Bars in Ontario: 1998-2006

### The Issue

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of second hand smoke (SHS) exposure and that the only way to fully protect non-smokers is to eliminate smoking in indoor spaces.<sup>1</sup> However, exposure to SHS continues to be widespread. In 2006, Canadians reported exposure to SHS in the past month, ranging from 23% at the workplace to 51% at entrances to buildings, with 31% exposed on outdoor patios of restaurants and bars.<sup>2</sup> Restrictive policies in workplaces and public places are effective in reducing smoking prevalence and consumption, and reducing exposure to SHS.<sup>3,4</sup> Monitoring public support for restrictions on smoking may help policy makers make effective decisions about tobacco control policies that will benefit the community as a whole. This *Update* presents public opinion data on trends in support by Ontarians for smoking bans in workplaces, restaurants and bars.

### Data Sources and Methodology

We analyzed cross-sectional data over nine years from the *CAMH Monitor*<sup>5</sup> (1998-2006), an ongoing, monthly, random-digit-dialing telephone survey of Ontario adults (aged 18+) that employs a region-stratified two-stage (household, respondent) probability sample design. We examined level of support for banning smoking in workplaces, restaurants and bars. A response that “smoking should not be allowed in any section of a workplace (restaurant or bar)” was considered supportive of a complete smoking ban. All survey estimates were weighted; variance and statistical tests were corrected for each survey’s sampling design.

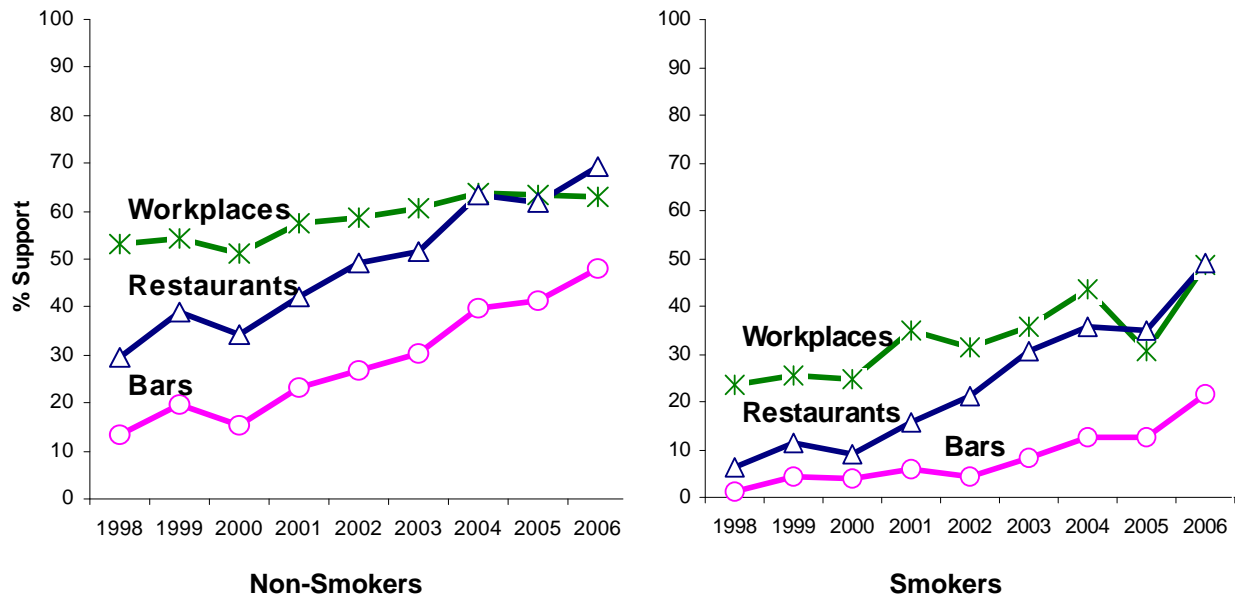
### Findings

- In Ontario, support for a complete smoking ban in workplaces increased from 46% in 1998 to 60% in 2006.
- Support for a complete smoking ban in restaurants increased from 24% in 1998 to 65% in 2006.
- Support for a complete smoking ban in bars increased from 10% in 1998 to 43% in 2006.
- Increases in support occurred among both non-smokers and current smokers; although smokers reported lower support for bans than non-smokers, the increase from 2004 to 2006 was greater among smokers than non-smokers.

**Public Support for Smoking Bans in Workplaces, Restaurants and Bars Ontario Adults (aged 18+), by Smoking Status: CAMH Monitor 1998, 2004 and 2006**

	Workplaces (%)			Restaurants (%)			Bars (%)		
	Smokers	Non-smokers	Total	Smokers	Non-smokers	Total	Smokers	Non-smokers	Total
1998	24	53	46	6	30	24	1	13	10
2004	44	64	59	36	63	57	13	40	34
2006	49	63	60	49	69	65	22	48	43

**Public Support for Smoking Bans in Workplaces, Restaurants and Bars Ontario Adults (aged 18+), by Smoking Status: CAMH Monitor 1998-2006**



## Discussion

There is substantial and increasing public support in Ontario among both non-smokers and smokers for banning smoking in workplaces, restaurants and bars. Analysis of subsequent years should provide evidence for the impact of the *Smoke-free Ontario Act* (June 2006) that banned smoking in all of these locations province-wide. Continued monitoring of support for smoke-free legislation is important for the long-term sustainability of these public policies.

## References

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4. Goodman P, Agnew M, McCaffrey M, Paul G, Clancy L. Effects of the Irish smoking ban on respiratory health of bar workers and air quality in Dublin pubs. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* 2007;175:840-845.
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