



September 2015

OTRU Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team Newsletter

Welcome to the second of four 2015-2016 updates from OTRU's Knowledge and Evaluation Support Team! We are excited to be sharing information about our activities and progress this year.

Who We Are

Dr. Pamela Kaufman, Dr. Shawn O'Connor and Dr. Robert Schwartz are the 2015-2016 project leads. The work is supported by a team of qualitative and quantitative research officers who have experience in cessation, prevention and protection. This group also calls on the expertise of the full OTRU team of scientists and research officers.

What We Do

Our team responds to knowledge needs, and evaluation and research requests from Ontario Public Health Units (PHUs), Tobacco Control Area Networks (TCANs), and other tobacco Transfer Payment Agencies (TPAs). We provide services to our stakeholders by:

- Supporting TCAN and PHU planning activities, including providing input on prioritizing evaluation and measurement needs
- Responding to questions about general research and evaluation approaches (e.g., giving suggestions for evaluating innovative initiatives, narrowing research questions, providing advice about design, sample, and data collection methods)
- Reviewing and providing feedback on research plans and protocols
- Supporting development of data collection tools (e.g., survey questions, interview and focus group discussion guides)
- Assisting in data collection, analysis and interpretation
- Providing feedback on ethics protocols and applications

In addition to supporting individual projects, we also help in identifying and facilitating collaborative opportunities among PHUs, TCANs and other tobacco TPAs to further improve coordination of tobacco control evaluation and knowledge generation efforts occurring throughout the province.

Current Projects

OTRU has received 61 evaluation and knowledge need requests from across the province for the coming year (Table 1): 25 new requests and 36 requests that have continued from the previous fiscal year. The majority of requests (49) have been from TCANs or PHUs. The team classifies requests by their complexity and the amount of time taken to complete them. So far this fiscal year, we have received 28 brief requests, 22 moderate requests and 11 intensive requests that can take a month or more to complete.



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Table 1: Number of Requests from Organizations (April – August, 2015)

TCAN	PHU	# of Requests
All TCANs	Provincial	4
South West TCAN (n=7)	TCAN Wide	4
	Middlesex-London	1
	Oxford	1
	Windsor-Essex	1
Central West TCAN (n=9)	TCAN wide	4
	Brant	1
	Haldimand-Norfolk	1
	Halton	1
	Niagara	1
	Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph	1
Central East TCAN (n=8)	TCAN wide	5
	Peel	1
	Peterborough	2
Toronto TCAN (n=7)	Toronto	7
East TCAN (n=6)	TCAN Wide	4
	Ottawa	2
North East TCAN (n=9)	TCAN wide	4
	Algoma	5
North West TCAN (n=3)	TCAN wide	1
	Thunder Bay	2
TPAs (n=8)	SHAF (Non Smokers' Rights Association)	3
	Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies	2
	Ontario Lung Association	1
	Program Training and Consultation Centre	1
	Youth Advocacy Training Institute	1

2016 Work Plans

Planning to evaluate some of your work plan activities?

Invite OTRU to join your next TCAN, PHU or TPA meeting. We can help you to identify evaluation and knowledge generation opportunities.



Highlights: New Requests

Evaluation of the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* Outdoor Smoking Restrictions

On January 1, 2015, the Ontario government adopted amendments to the existing *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* (SFOA) regulations to further strengthen protection from secondhand smoke in outdoor spaces. These amendments make it illegal to:

1. Smoke on and around children's playgrounds and publicly owned sport fields and surfaces (e.g., areas for basketball, baseball, soccer or beach volleyball, ice rinks, tennis courts, splash pads and swimming pools that are owned by a municipality, the province or a postsecondary education institution)
2. Smoke on all bar and restaurant patios, whether covered or not (with an exemption for uncovered patios established by the Royal Canadian Legion – Ontario Provincial Command before November 18, 2013).¹

The evaluation is designed to support learning by Ontario's tobacco control community stakeholders. It will provide objective information on implementation and effects of the new SFOA regulations and contribute to ongoing performance improvement. Key evaluation questions include:

1. To what extent is the amended *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* effective at restricting smoking in the regulated environments?
2. Have there been any challenges to implementing/enforcing the amendment? What could be done to overcome them?
3. How has the amended *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* influenced the use of outdoor facilities?
4. How has the amended *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* affected smoking behavior (e.g. quit intentions, quit attempts, successful quits, reduction in consumption)?

To answer these evaluation questions, data is being collected in four case study locations across Ontario (Algoma, Lambton, Toronto and Windsor Essex) using the following methods:

- Street intercept surveys with smokers and non-smokers
- Observations of patios
- Key informant interviews
- Tobacco Enforcement Officer Surveys
- Cigarette butt litter analyses
- Administrative data analyses

Results of the evaluation will be available in March 2016.

¹ Ontario Government. Smoke-Free Ontario. Available at: <http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/smoke-free-ontario> (Accessed May 21, 2015).



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Tobacco Cessation Practices and Services in Central West and North West TCANs

This year OTRU is supporting the Central West TCAN and North West TCAN in conducting environmental scans of public health and health-care organizations. The purpose of the scans is to explore the current state of tobacco cessation practices and services in these regions.

Health-care providers who are members of local communities of practice were invited to complete an online survey to determine if and how their organizations were implementing tobacco dependence interventions. Tobacco dependence interventions are any interventions where patient tobacco use is assessed, and an intervention and some sort of follow-up is implemented. This is also known as the 5A's: Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange.

The outcomes of the environmental scans will provide a picture of tobacco dependence services currently in place and identify areas for improvement in the local community and across the TCANs.

Looking for Help?

If you would like to discuss your support needs further, please complete our [Knowledge and Evaluation Support Request Form](http://216.34.99.34/votingmodule/s180/f/420080/1143/) (<http://216.34.99.34/votingmodule/s180/f/420080/1143/>) online or contact our team members:



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