

# Hamilton takes collaborative, community-based approach to help smokers quit:

*interdisciplinary campaign promotes public health behaviour change, clinical best practices in tobacco cessation*

by Hamilton Academy of Medicine  
Hamilton Public Health Services

**H**AMILTON HAS A REPUTATION AS A HEALTH CARE HUB WITHIN SOUTHERN ONTARIO AND YET, LIKE MANY OTHER ONTARIO CITIES, MUCH OF THE POPULATION SUFFERS FROM PREVENTABLE HEALTH CONDITIONS.

In 2009, under the leadership of OMA District 4 Director Dr. Richard Tytus, the Hamilton Academy of Medicine (HAM), Hamilton District Pharmacists Association (HDPHA), and Hamilton Public Health Services joined forces to address the main contributors to preventable chronic diseases — namely, inactivity, salt intake, and tobacco use.

Among the lessons learned from these campaigns is that it takes a comprehensive and long-term approach to effect health behaviour change.

Despite the high levels of awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use, about one in five Ontarians — or 1.6 million people — smoke. Unfortunately, in Hamilton the percentage is even greater, reflecting the broad health disparities in the community and the fact that tobacco use is higher among populations with lower income.

“It’s Hamilton’s Time to Get Moving,” and “Halt the Salt,” were typical of local campaign initiatives; they included targeted events, media coverage, promotional posters, etc. However, when it came time to develop the “It’s Hamilton’s Time to Quit” campaign in August 2010, the planning team chose to take a more comprehensive and sustainable approach.

After considering the key players involved in an individual’s efforts to quit smoking, the team extended invitations to various health-care organizations and stakeholders throughout the city and province to strengthen the support network.

Within very little time, the team grew to include a broad advisory board with representation from Smokers’ Helpline, Hamilton Emergency Medical Services, Hamilton Police Services, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN, Ontario Lung Association, Hamilton Family Health Team, Hamilton Health Sciences, Dell Pharmacy, HAM, HDPHA, and Hamilton Public Health Services.

An interdisciplinary and multi-sector campaign was planned to increase awareness of and access to tobacco-dependence treatment services provided in the City of Hamilton.

Champions appeared in the media, and information pieces were developed and distributed to the public (see poster opposite).

A pre-campaign and post-campaign survey was completed by physicians and pharmacists within HAM and HDPHA to determine their smoking cessation knowledge and billing

practices; a toolkit was developed to provide information and resources to support the implementation of a clinical best practices in tobacco cessation; and a half-day education session on tobacco dependence treatment was facilitated for family physicians and their staff, pharmacists, and allied health-care providers.

The lesson learned from this unique, collaborative approach is that comprehensive and sustainable methods need to be developed in order to support both clinical practice change among health-care professionals, as well as health behaviour change among members of the public.

Supporting frontline health-care professionals to provide a “no wrong door” approach to smoking cessation services in the City of Hamilton has the potential to significantly increase the health of our community.

Although the official campaign is over, the process and lessons learned have inspired further development of smoking cessation initiatives involving even more stakeholders and access to information.

Hamilton discovered it only takes an individual to start smoking, but a community to quit. ■

IT'S HAMILTON'S TIME TO GET HEALTHY  
It's time to

# QUIT



The majority  
of people  
who smoke  
**want to quit.**

## Quitting is hard but you can help your patient **make it happen.**

In less than 3 minutes, you can make a difference in your patient's health.  
Follow the 5As:

- Ask** your patient if he/she smokes.
- Advise** your patient to quit smoking.
- Assess** your patient's readiness to quit smoking.
- Assist** your patient to quit smoking.
- Arrange** a follow-up.

For more information on helping your patients  
quit smoking go to [hamiltontdoctors.ca](http://hamiltontdoctors.ca).

Adapted from presentation: 5A's: Assess, Advise, Assist, Arrange, Ask

