

# **Working Together to Prevent Cancer: Community Right To Know**

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# Working Together to Prevent Cancer:



Community Right To Know



# Community Right To Know: Definition

A system of public access to a broad range of information on hazardous substance use and release into the environment, as well as the impact on human and environmental health

# History of Community Right To Know in Toronto

- ★ 20 year history of CRTK in T.O.
  - ★ BOH directed MOH to investigate in 1983
  - ★ Council directed MOH to draft By-law 1986
  - ★ Draft By-law deferred in 1987 (WHMIS)
  - ★ Need identified in Environmental Plan (2000)
  - ★ Adopted as priority for implementation by City Council (2002)

# Community Right-To-Know: Objectives

- ✦ Honours community and worker's rights
- ✦ Assists decision-makers in identifying priorities
- ✦ Improves neighbourhood safety
- ✦ Allows for tracking of progress in toxic use reduction
- ✦ Aids in monitoring, diagnosis and prevention of health effects from hazardous exposures

# Proven Benefits of Community Right To Know

- ✦ Enhances emergency response planning
- ✦ Reduces liability
- ✦ Reduces use of hazardous substances by industry
- ✦ Generates cost savings
- ✦ Increases community involvement
- ✦ Reduces risks to workers

# Benefits to City of Toronto

- ✦ Decreased hazardous substances/safer communities
- ✦ Safer City workplaces
- ✦ Increased efficiency: consolidated information, accessible to all departments
- ✦ Improved employer/employee relations
- ✦ Enhances Toronto's reputation

# CRTK: Perceived Barriers

- ✦ Security
- ✦ Trade Secrets
- ✦ Property Values
- ✦ Costs to businesses

Bottom line: CRTK provides for safer communities and workplaces

# Key Carcinogens

- ☀ Asbestos<sup>\*\*</sup>
- ☀ Benzene<sup>\*\*</sup>
- ☀ Tetrachlorethylene<sup>\*\*</sup>
- ☀ Dioxins & Furans <sup>\*\*</sup>
- ☀ PAH's <sup>\*\*</sup>
- ☀ Formaldehyde<sup>\*</sup>
- ☀ Cadmium<sup>\*</sup>
- ☀ Chromium<sup>\*</sup>
- ☀ 1,3 Butadiene<sup>\*</sup>
- ☀ Trichlorethylene<sup>\*</sup>
- ☀ Methylene Chloride<sup>+</sup>
- ☀ Diesel Fuel<sup>+</sup>
- ☀ Pesticides<sup>+</sup>

## Sources:

\*Ten Key Carcinogens in Toronto Workplaces and Environment, Toronto Public Health, March, 2002

+ Preventing Occupational and Environmental Cancer, TCPC Environmental and Occupational Working Group, 2001



# Community Right To Know Case Study: South Riverdale/Beaches

To explore current gaps and community needs regarding community right-to-know and develop recommendations to help the City progress in its development of a community right-to-know strategy.

Funding provided by Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) in 2003

# South Riverdale/Beaches

- ★ Historical concerns: lead
- ★ Major pollution source in community
- ★ Active/organized community (South Riverdale CHC, Environmental Liaison Ctte., Chinese Environmental Ambassadors)
- ★ Demographics - mix of immigrant lower income and education and Canadian-born higher income and education populations
- ★ Industrial/residential mix
- ★ Recreational/tourist area
- ★ Adjunct to other studies

# Methodology

- ✦ Community needs assessment
- ✦ Data review and analysis
- ✦ Evaluation and Recommendations

# Community Needs Assessment

## ☀ Focus groups

- Community-based environmental groups
  - South Riverdale Environmental Liaison Committee (SRELC)
  - Chinese Environmental Ambassadors (CEA)

## ☀ Key informant interviews

- Toronto Fire Services and TPH Emergency Response
- Workplaces
  - CUPE rep., local healthcare facility
  - Toronto Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic - (TWHSLC) represents unorganized, minimum wage, immigrant workforce



# Focus Groups: Gaps in Community-based Information

- ✱ Lack of access to user-friendly information that leads to action
- ✱ Lack of coordinated effort to disseminate reliable, relevant information
- ✱ Lack of financial support for CRTK initiatives

# Key Informants: Emergency Planning and Firefighters - gaps

- ✱ No comprehensive data-base
- ✱ Limited access: chemicals held in buildings
- ✱ Difficult to be proactive: ER limited to individual incidents
- ✱ Existing data requirements not consistently enforced
- ✱ Information not always available from smaller companies
- ✱ Information collected but not consistently shared
- ✱ Limited public access to information

# Key Informants: Workplace - gaps

Small, ethnic unorganized workforce vs. medium-sized organized, regulated

- Knowledge of WHMIS, OHSA, exposures
- Joint health and safety committees
- Knowledge of carcinogens
- Access to MSDS sheets
- Health and safety training
- Both identified need for CRTK

# Collection of Environmental Data

- ☀ Listing of “higher concern” industries in community (manufacturing, dry cleaning, auto repair, auto body shops, service stations, publishing/printing, film development, photo development, incineration and landscaping)
- ☀ Review of websites:
  - ☀ Canadian Environmental Protection Agency (NPRI, Environmental Registry, Canada Gazette)
  - ☀ Ministry Of Environment (EBR, OnAir),
  - ☀ MOL (press releases)
  - ☀ Pollution Watch
  - ☀ City of Toronto

# Summary:

## Gaps in Environmental Data

- ✦ Limited data for many “higher concern” companies
- ✦ Limited data for small businesses
- ✦ Exemptions from reporting
- ✦ Difficult to access info on remediations: i.e. Certificates of Approval
- ✦ Accessibility of information
- ✦ Inconsistent information

# Project Findings: Environmental Data for South Riverdale/Beach

- ☀ NPRI and Pollution Watch: 11 of 115 businesses (10%) reported results
- ☀ EBR: 2 of 30 businesses (dry cleaners and auto body) MOE search - 10 of 30
- ☀ OnAIR: difficult to access information
- ☀ Gaps:
  - ☀ Limited data for many “higher concern” and small businesses
  - ☀ Information often difficult to access
  - ☀ Inconsistent information

# Collection of Occupational Data

- ☀ WHMIS

- ☀ Dry cleaners

- ☀ Auto body shops

  - ☀ NIOSH

  - ☀ Regulations

  - ☀ Studies

# Summary: Gaps in Occupational Data & Key Concerns

## ☀ WHMIS: Limitations

- ☀ Language barriers
- ☀ Trade secrets
- ☀ Accessibility of specific workplace information to the public

## ☀ Autobody and Dry Cleaning Industries

- ☀ Exposure to carcinogens
- ☀ Cancers: multiple body symptoms
- ☀ Lack of resources
- ☀ Language barriers

# Summary: Key Issues from Study

- ★ Lack of access to user-friendly, relevant information for public (data-bases, government agencies)
- ★ Lack of access to comprehensive information for emergency planning, prevention and action
- ★ Small workplaces: lack of access to information - for public, industry exemptions
- ★ Small unorganized workforce: lack of information, resources, training and support

# Recommendations

- ✦ In-house inventory
- ✦ Community Right-to-know by-law
- ✦ Develop tools to increase public accessibility
- ✦ Create incentives for industries to reduce use of toxic materials
- ✦ Designate FTE for CRTK

# Next Steps

- ✦ Presentation at January BOH
- ✦ Collaboration - form joint sub-committee
- ✦ Do inventory

**End**