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August 14, 2020

John Bowman – President and CEO
North Island College
2300 Ryan Rd.
Courtenay, BC V9N 8N6

Dear Mr. Bowman:

Here is my report, *Tobacco Free Campus at North Island College's Comox Valley Campus*. The issues addressed surround exposure of NIC students and staff, and children at Beaufort Childcare to second-hand smoke. Thank you for your support and guidance through this process.

The two most problematic locations are the designated smoking area in front of Tyee building and the entrance to Portable Village. Tyee building poses a concern both for NIC students and staff entering the building, but also due to the proximity to Beaufort Childcare Society's outdoor play space. Portable Village poses a concern for students and staff entering/exiting the area.

Surveys were sent out to NIC students and staff, as well as Beaufort Childcare staff and parents (many of which are students or staff). Based on the information collected the following actions are recommended:

1. A smoking cessation program or support be made available to NIC students.
2. Move the Tyee building designated smoking area to the back of the building.
3. The Portable Village smoking area be moved to the back of the parking lot or eliminated.
4. NIC should become a tobacco free campus if a further student surveys show support.

Working on this project has been pleasurable and I am happy to answer any questions. I trust you will pass this on to the rest of the NIC senate and senior administration. Please feel free to contact me at gkavaliu@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

G. Kavaliu

Glen Kavaliunas

**Proposal for a Tobacco Free Campus
at North Island College's Comox Valley Campus**

for

John Bowman – President and CEO

North Island College

Courtenay, British Columbia

by

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UBC English 301 Student

August 15, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Second-hand smoke exposure at North Island College's (NIC) Comox Valley campus spurred the need to determine the feasibility of making the college a tobacco free campus. Steps towards that included identifying areas of high second-hand smoke exposure and finding ways to minimize the exposure. Tyee building and Portable Village designated smoking areas were the main locations that caused concern.

Online surveys were conducted with NIC students and staff, as well as staff and parents at Beaufort Children's Society (Beaufort) daycare. Due to the pandemic and no classes being in session at the time of the report, survey responses were limited. Interviews were conducted virtually with North Island student union representatives and NIC VP of Facilities.

Recommendations coming from this report included:

1. Providing students support with smoking cessation.
2. Moving the designated smoking area at Tyee building to the back away from Beaufort's facility.
3. Moving the designated smoking area at Portable Village to the other side of the back-parking lot.
4. NIC should become a tobacco free campus if a further student and staff surveys show support.

INTRODUCTION

North Island College (NIC) is located on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, with their main campus located in the Comox Valley. NIC Comox Valley campus has three designated smoking areas located outside of main buildings: one at Tye Building, one at Portable Village and a staff smoking area outside of Komox Hall. The purpose of this report is to highlight health risk posed to NIC students and staff, and the children at Beaufort Childcare Society (Beaufort) through the exposure to second-hand smoke. The designated smoking area outside of the main entrance of Tye building and one at the entrance to Portable Village are locations of common second-hand smoke exposure. The designated smoking areas are the legally required distance from building entrances, but they are roofed structures which hold the smoke down. If there is a slight wind, the smoke carries outside of the designated smoking area to surrounding areas.

The designated smoking area for the Tye building is extremely close to Beaufort daycare's outdoor play space and directly outside of the bookstore and the cafeteria. This creates a concern over exposure of young children to second-hand smoke and the health-related conditions and problems associated with the use of tobacco (including smoking, chewing and vaping).

This report and its findings are timely as NIC is in the planning phase of an expansion which could see an increase in tobacco use, making now an ideal time to move towards a tobacco free campus.

Background on Tobacco Health Risks

Society is aware of the negative health affects of smoking and second-hand smoke.

Unfortunately, smoke is not selective and even non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke risk

diseases and disabilities. The Center for Disease Control states, “Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Smoking also increases risk for tuberculosis, certain eye diseases, and problems of the immune system, including rheumatoid arthritis.”

(Centers for Disease Control *Health Effects*)

“Second-hand smoke exposure [still] contributes to approximately 41,000 deaths among non-smoking adults and 400 deaths in infants each year.” (Centers for Disease Control *Health Effects*). The alarming number of second-hand smoke exposures can be out of the control of non-smokers as is the case of students at NIC. “Second-hand smoke causes stroke, lung cancer, and coronary heart disease in adults.” (Centers for Disease Control *Health Effects*) Children at Beaufort daycare are exposed to second hand smoke resulting in an “...increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, more severe asthma, respiratory symptoms, and slowed lung growth.” (Centers for Disease Control *Health Effects*) This exposure over the four years they are at the daycare can have lasting repercussions throughout their life, impacting their health and costing taxpayers thousands of dollars in medical expenses.

Description of the Current Tobacco Policy at NIC

Currently NIC is a smoke free campus other than in designated smoking areas, as explained in the NIC handbook of policies and procedures, “Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is permitted in designated areas only” (*Policy & Procedures Manual - North Island College*). According to VP Fowler, NIC requires five designated smoking areas for the population and layout of the college.

(interview July 22, 2020), but currently there are only three designated smoking areas on NIC Courtenay campus.

Impact of Current Tobacco Policy at NIC

The health and welfare of students, staff at NIC and the infants and toddlers at Beaufort is of utmost importance. Specifically, the negative health impacts of first and second-hand smoke. Although NIC has made some steps toward reducing exposure to second-hand smoke on campus, the designated smoking areas do little to protect to non-smokers. Some students start using tobacco products to make friends and others continue out of convenience or to help reduce stress, yet all students and staff are exposed to second-hand smoke as a result. Investigating the use of tobacco on campus and the impact on students is vital, especially with the increase in vaping and the unknown health results.

Tyee Building Designated Smoking Area. In order to enter the Tyee building main door to attend classes or go to the cafeteria/ bookstore, students must walk through the second-hand smoke from the designated smoking area. Another concern with the location of the Tyee building smoking area is the proximity to the Beaufort outdoor play space. This proximity means children ages eighteen months to five years old are exposed to second-hand smoke daily and witness the unhealthy activity of college students. On many occasions the staff of Beaufort have commented on the smoke blowing over to the play yard, and the children have asked why the air smells like candy when the vape smoke blows over the play area.

This same designated smoking area for the Tyee building forces any student who needs to buy textbooks or food to walk through the smoke to get to their destination. This is consistent across campus at the main entrance of all buildings.



Fig. 1: Tyee Building designated smoking area and Beaufort Children's Society's play space

Portable Village Smoking Area. The designated smoking area in the area known as Portable Village is the other troublesome area. There are about ten portables together in a group with a ramp system connecting them. There are two staircases up to this area, one at either end. The entrance/exit closest to the rest of the campus leads directly into the designated smoking area for this section of campus. This means everyone entering/exiting leaving Portable Village by the main entrance/exit is exposed to second-hand smoke.



Fig. 2: Portable Village designated smoking area and entrances and exits

Proposed Solution

A solution for the second-hand smoke from the Tyee building would be to move the smoking area to the other side of building and away from the main entrance. This would mean smoking, or inhaling second-hand smoke, would once again be a choice for students. Moving the designated smoking area away from the daycare would also reduce the children's exposure to second-hand smoke.

The full solution is for NIC to become a tobacco free campus. This would limit the number of students who start smoking due to stress or to build friendships and would eliminate the exposure of other staff and students to second-hand smoke. "Comprehensive smoke-free campus policies make it easier for people to resist and quit smoking and can have a tremendous impact on the health of an entire campus community!" (*Smoke-Free Campuses*) An additional benefit for NIC would be a possible reduction in medical and employee and family assistance expenses. "Everyone deserves to breathe clean air where they live, work, study, and play. Tobacco-free policies decrease costs for schools without impacting enrollment." (*Smoke-Free Campuses*)

METHODS

Primary data sources include consultations with Amanda Peters – Executive Coordinator of Beaufort Children's Society and interviews with John Bowman - president of NIC, Colin Fowler – NIC VP Finance and Facilities, Echo Hope – Comox Valley Director of NIC Student Union, and Carissa Wilson – NIC Student Union - Organiser, College Relations & Services Coordinator. Primary research and surveys to current NIC students and staff as well as staff and

parents at Beaufort focus on the support from the NIC community to become a tobacco free campus, as smoke is not healthy.

Secondary sources include publications on the effects of second-hand smoke on young children, NIC's smoking policy, and The Tobacco Free Campus movement. (Tobacco Free Campus Guide, 2011)

DATA SECTION

Location of designated smoking areas

NIC currently has three designated smoking areas: Komox Hall for staff, Tyee building, and Portable Village. The survey and interviews indicated the only the designated smoking areas at Tyee building and Portable Village are a major source and concern for second-hand smoke.

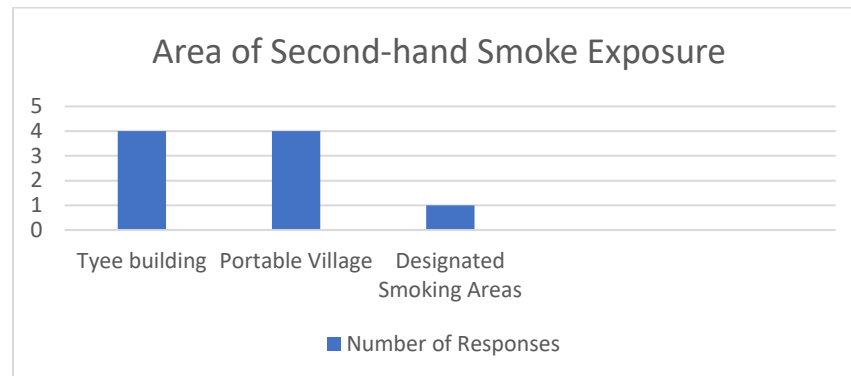


Fig. 3: Break down of survey response to areas of second-hand smoke exposure

Interview Summaries

To gather critical information regarding second-hand smoke and tobacco use at NIC Comox Valley campus three pivotal people were interviewed: Colin Fowler – Vice President Finances and Facilities, Echo Hope - Director of the NIC Student Society, and Carissa Wilson - NIC Student Union - Organiser, College Relations & Services Coordinator.

All interviewed parties agreed the designated smoking area by Tyee building is a concern due to both the proximity to the main entrance to Tyee and the proximity to the outdoor play space at Beaufort daycare. There seems to be no support, outside of MSP, for students who wish to stop smoking or using tobacco, but NIC employees do have support both financially and emotionally through the employee family assistance program. There was a divide in the number of smoking areas required for NIC. The VP stated that five designated smoking areas were required (although there are currently only three on campus), but both student union representatives stated that one or zero designated smoking areas were required.

Survey Summaries

Two surveys were conducted. One survey was presented to parents and staff of Beaufort daycare. The other survey was presented to students and staff at NIC. Survey responses in the second set were minimal as no on-campus courses are currently operating, all staff are working from home, and students are on summer vacation. As a result, the information is not necessarily representative of the full NIC Comox Valley student body.

NIC Student and Staff Survey. Students and staff were asked to complete this survey online. Due to limited access to staff and student emails and many people on summer holidays, there were only eleven respondents. To make decisions based on this data many more students and staff need to be surveyed.

When students and staff were surveyed, forty-five percent indicated they smoke while fifty-five percent said no (*Fig. 3*). The next question asked if they would like to quit. Of the forty

percent-five who indicated they smoke, eighty percent said they would like to quit (*Fig. 4*). That means out of the eleven people surveyed, only six smoke and four of those five want to quit.

1) Do you smoke?
11 responses

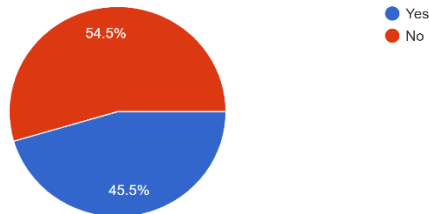


Fig. 4: Do you smoke?

If you answered yes to the previous questions, do you wish to quit?
5 responses

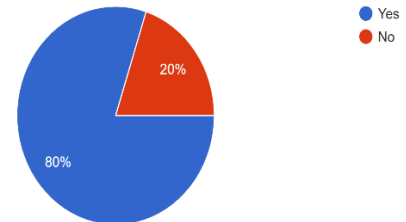


Fig. 5: Do you wish to quit smoking?

The respondents were divided when asked if removal of the designated smoking areas would help students and staff quit smoking. Fifty percent said no, twenty-five percent said yes, and the other twenty-five percent said maybe. (*Fig. 6*)

If you answered yes to the previous question, would removing designated smoking areas help you quit?
4 responses

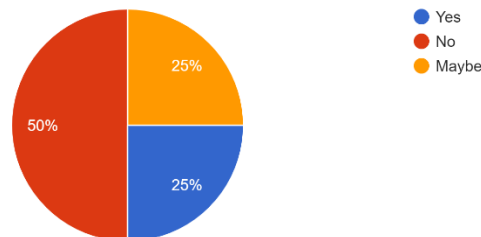


Fig. 6: Would removing designated smoking areas help you quit smoking?

The number of students and staff who are interested in quitting smoking was high, yet smoking cessation help / programs were sparse or unknown. Students have few options: MSP will assist with the cost of smoking cessations supports and students can call the nurses hotline (811) for emotional assistance and advice. Staff have the support of the NIC Employee and Family Assistance program as well as extended medical benefits. (See Fig.7)

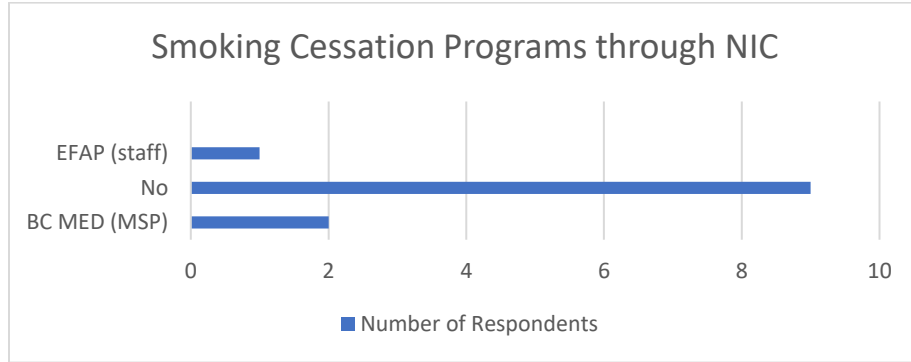


Fig. 7: Smoking Cessation support

When looking at the possibility of going to a completely tobacco free campus, thirty-six percent of the students surveyed said no designated smoking areas were essential at NIC. Nine percent of student said five or more designated smoking areas were needed, while another eighteen percent said only one designated smoking area was essential. The last thirty-seven percent said two or three smoking areas were essential. NIC would need to do more research, but according to those polled the number of designated smoking areas could be reduced or eliminated.

5) How many designated smoking areas are essential for North Island College campus?
11 responses

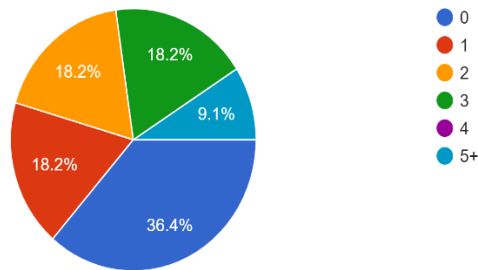


Fig. 8: How many designated smoking areas are essential?

Of those surveyed, eighty percent said they had heard of Beaufort daycare, but of those surveyed sixty-four percent of respondents said they were concerned about the proximity of the designated smoking area at Tyee to the childcare outdoor play space.

The other comments and suggestions coming from the survey included:

- “Moving smoking areas away from main buildings.” (anonymous)
- “It would be unfair to remove the ability to smoke on campus as it is a method of stress relief.” (anonymous)

Beaufort Staff and Parent Survey. Parents and staff at Beaufort were asked to complete this survey online. Many of the parents are also staff or students at NIC. Of the twenty-six people who responded to the Beaufort Parent and Staff Survey, fifty percent indicated they were also student or staff at NIC. This group indicated that sixty-two percent of them have been exposed to second-hand smoke when performing their day-to-day activities at NIC. Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated this happened “often”. The main areas of exposure indicated were outside the Tyee building, Portable Village, and Beaufort’s outdoor play area. Respondents were able to list multiple locations. (See Fig. 9)

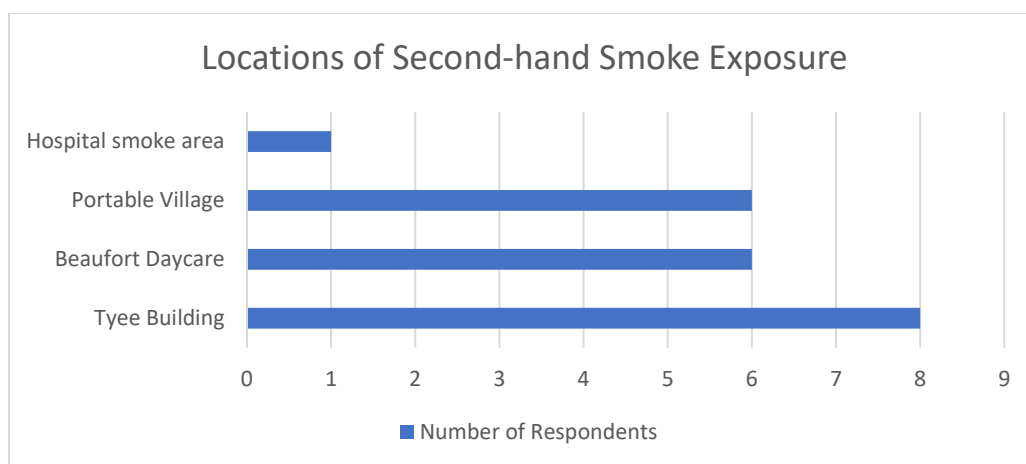


Fig. 9: Location of exposure to second-hand smoke

When asked if the location of the smoking area at the Tyee building and the proximity to the childcare outdoor play space was a concern, eighty-nine percent, or twenty-four out of twenty-five, of the respondents answered yes. These thoughts were also reflected in the respondents' final comments which were all involved to concerns regarding proximity to children and health effects.

Conflicting Interest Regarding Study

Criticism from students who use tobacco is a conflicting interest. Some saw a threat to smoking on campus, instead of multiple options. Students identified smoking as a source of stress relief. Support for smoking cessation and stress relief may help eliminate resistance. There are no other apparent conflicting issues in this study.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

Second-hand smoke exposure is an issue for NIC staff and students, and Beaufort parents and staff as indicated in surveys and interviews. The most problematic areas are the designated smoking area at the Tyee building, especially the proximity to Beaufort's outdoor play area, and the designated smoking area outside Portable Village.

Most students and staff who indicated they use tobacco were interested in quitting. Smoking cessation help is available for NIC employees, but students do not currently have access to a program to aid in smoking cessation outside of MSP or 811, the nurse's hotline.

Recommendations Based on Findings

Centered on the findings of this study the following actions are recommended:

1. Based on the interviews and surveys conducted, NIC and North Island Student Union should take on a more in-depth survey of students as, due to COVID online class delivery and summertime, the one conducted for this project did not generate enough responses to represent the student voice.
2. A smoking cessation program or support be made available to NIC students.
3. Designated smoking areas be located away from main entrances to make exposure to second-hand smoke an option.
4. The designated smoking area at Tyee building be moved to an area at the back of the building. (*Since starting this project, I have learned that for the 2020-21 school year the designated smoking area at the Tyee building has been moved to the back of the building. The old smoking area has become a bike lock-up area. This limits the exposure to NIC students and staff and removes the exposure of the children at Beaufort to second-hand smoke.)
5. The designated smoking area a Portable Village be moved to the other side of the back-parking lot.
6. NIC should become a tobacco free campus if a further student surveys show support.

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