



Asthma Society Welcomes Ontario's Push for Industry Alternatives to Coal
New Regulation will help protect people with Asthma and Allergies from the
Effects of Climate Change

TORONTO - December 4, 2014 - Asthma is a potentially fatal condition that affects over 3 million Canadians. It is the third-most common chronic disease in Canada and the leading cause of hospital admission. It continues to be the leading cause of children visiting hospital Emergency Departments. It continues to kill. Around the world, approximately 250,000 people die prematurely each year because of asthma. Almost every day, someone in Canada dies from asthma resulting in the deaths of 250-300 Canadians each year.

Air pollution contributes to the development of childhood asthma and is a major trigger for asthma exacerbations. Less known is that climate change also poses serious risks for those with asthma and respiratory allergies in Canada and around the world.

Climate change is affecting human lung health in several ways. Increased concentrations of ozone, fine particulate matter and dangerous chemicals will bring about longer growing seasons with longer periods of active pollen production; longer dry periods and droughts lead to more forest fires and wood smoke, as well as more dust and dust mites; more extreme weather conditions lead to flooding and increased mould; and a plant world under stress acting on its "instinct" to survive with greater production of plant pollen, lead to more problems for people suffering from ragweed, hay fever and other respiratory allergies, often triggering asthma attacks.

This is why the Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) strongly supports the Ontario Government's recently proposed regulation to help Ontario's big, energy-intensive industries reduce their reliance on coal with access to alternative, lower carbon fuels. We believe the regulation will lead to significant reductions in

greenhouse gas emissions, thereby mitigating climate change, while also helping to clean the air Ontarians breathe every day.

“Any regulation that reduces emissions from coal and pet-coke is good news for people with asthma, respiratory allergies and other lung diseases,” said Asthma Society of Canada President & CEO Robert Oliphant. “There is a direct link between the use of dirty fuels like coal and asthma exacerbations, hospital admissions, and untimely deaths, not to mention climate change. Helping energy intensive sectors like the cement industry reduce their use of coal by switching to alternative, lower carbon fuels is the right thing to do for the health of Ontarians.”

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