

# Six Nations tobacco industry regulating itself

By Donna Durie  
Writer

Six Nations Health Services is looking to reduce youth smoking rates on the territory.

But a MacMaster University study claiming five per cent of children as young as five were smoking here may have exaggerated earlier statistics garnered from another study.

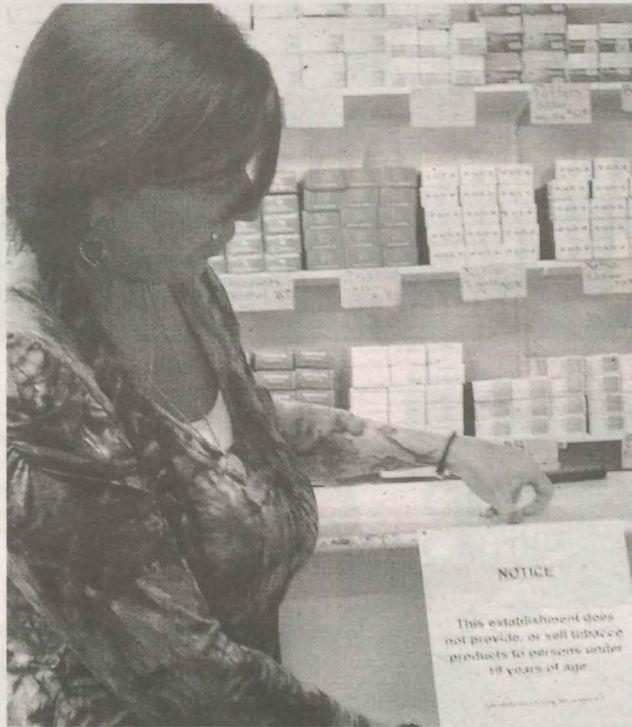
Health Services released statistics two few weeks ago that claimed about five per cent of children on the territory aged five to 10 smoke.

That statistic came from a Tobacco Think Tank Report compiled by McMaster University doctors Sonia Anand and Sujane Kan-

dasamy, which contains recommendations on curbing youth smoking rates on Six Nations.

But the 2012 Tobacco Think Tank Report is not a stand alone study but rather a spin-off of an earlier study, 'Health Assessment and Risk Evaluation among Aboriginal People' (SHARE-AP) conducted more than two decades ago in the late 90s.

Dr. Kandasamy said in the 1990's SHARE-AP study her medical team recruited households on Six Nations and selected families randomly who had been assigned to health intervention. All families completed health assessments (questionnaires,



Posting Notice no sales to minors. (Photo by Donna Durie)

physical measurements) at the initial visit and then again six months later.

"At the initial visit, children were asked these questions by a trained research assistant who recorded their answers on the case report forms," said Kandasamy.

She said study results were interpreted from those answers. "It is from the children's answers where this percentage came to light."

But the new tobacco report also went beyond health statistics and took aim at Six Nations' burgeoning tobacco industry.

It recommended smoke shops increase cigarette prices.

It also recommended Six

Nations does more to restrict youth access to tobacco. It also suggests that "the community should adopt a minimum age" for the purchase of tobacco.

Some other recommendations in the report include: -Increase enforcement of restricting youth access to tobacco

-Create and enforce by-laws regarding advertising and selling tobacco to minors 'ie' signs.

-Control what it called "contraband" tobacco, which includes the measure of allowing police to stop and search vehicles "if reasonable" for carrying raw leaf tobacco

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# Six Nations tobacco industry doesn't sell to minors

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-increase the price of "Rollies" (bag cigarettes) to increase competition between products

But an independent survey by Turtle Island News found of 36 smoke shops surveyed all of them already imposed age restrictions on tobacco product sales and posted signs restricting the sales

There are 101 smoke shops on Six Nations, according to the report.

The Turtle Island News survey of 36 smoke shops found every single one of them had a policy in place to not sell cigarettes to minors and required I.D. if a customer appeared to be

under 19 years of age.

Ten of those smoke shops already had signs insisting that customers show proof of age if they appear to be under 19.

Another 11 freely accepted a sign from the Turtle Island News posting their policy of not selling to minors.

Only one smoke shop would not put up the sign because the owner was not available to approve it.

At one shop a handmade sign hangs on the door reading "Must have I.D. for proof of age."

A store employee said underage kids trying to buy tobacco products is a daily occurrence but "rules are rules." After being denied, she said, "a lot of kids walk

out mad."

A number of smoke shop employees said they don't even get minors coming into their stores.

Laurie Reed, manager of Factory Direct smokes, is one of those employees.

"We haven't really had anyone that looked younger than 19 come in to purchase smokes," she said. "If someone that I thought was younger than 19, I definitely would ask them how old they are. But I've never had that happen to me; never had any children come in. Mostly everyone who comes in is 40 and above. I know that myself or my sister or daughter-in-law would never sell cigarettes to minors."

She readily agreed to post a sign on the front counter stating they do not sell to minors.

A male employee at I.Q. Tobacco on Hwy. 54 had young male teenagers come in looking to buy cigarettes but say they forgot their I.D. when asked. "I ask them for I.D. and they say, 'oh no, I don't have any,' but yet they leave and they jump in their car and drive away. So you're going to tell me you drove all the way out here with no license? That's what gets me."

When told of Turtle Island News random survey, Dr. Kandasamy said it's a combination of both parental supervision and accessibility to tobacco that might

lead a young child to smoke.

"It is believed that parental supervision does play a big role," said Dr. Kandasamy. "Although children aged five to 10 would not necessarily be able to purchase directly from a smoke shop, they might have older siblings that can. The main issue here is easy access to cigarettes (whether it is in the home or outside of the home)."

She continued, "We cannot put blame solely on parents/caregivers, nor can we fully blame smoke shops. It is shared responsibility between the home and the community to set a healthy example for the younger generation."

The Ontario government places harsh penalties on store owners who are caught selling cigarettes to minors.

The fine for any store convicted of selling tobacco products to minors in Ontario is \$5000, according to the provincial Ministry of Finance, which governs the tobacco industry under the Tobacco Tax Act and Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Off-reserve, in 2008, the overall rate of non-compliance throughout the Province of Ontario on selling tobacco to underage youth was 10 per cent, according to the Ministry of Finance.-With files from Chase Jarrett, Lynda Powell and TIN staff-