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## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### *SHHA Changes Smoking Policy*

**(Exeter, ON)** – The South Huron Hospital Association (“SHHA”) has had a smoking policy in place for many years, whereby smoking had been banned within nine (9) metres of any hospital entrance or exit.

Recently SHHA made the decision to migrate to a policy of going smoke-free throughout its entire premises, whereby smoking would no longer be permitted anywhere on the hospital’s property – inside or out – for all staff, patients and visitors.

“As a leading healthcare provider, it is essential for the SHHA to take a leading role in protecting anyone who comes to our sites from the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Going smoke-free sends a clear message to our communities that prevention is as important as treatment of illness, and that, as a healthcare organization, we are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment” says Todd Stepanuik, President and Chief Executive Officer of the SHHA.

The provincial government has recently filed regulations under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* and the *Electronic Cigarettes Act*. **These regulations come into force on January 1, 2016 and as of that date, these regulations ban smoking (of both cigarettes and electronic cigarettes) on all hospital grounds in Ontario, unless temporary designated smoking areas are identified on the premises.**

**What this means for hospital patients and visitors effective January 1, 2016:**

- Individuals can no longer smoke on hospital property or in vehicles parked on hospital owned property.
- Supports are in place for patients and staff who want to make an attempt to quit. This support includes increased access to smoking cessation opportunities such as nicotine replacement therapy.

We thank you for your co-operation in maintaining a healthy environment for everyone.