

**Partnership
For
Pesticide
Bylaws**

*Ontario College of Family
Physicians*

*Registered Nurses
Association of Ontario*

*Canadian Association of
Physicians for the
Environment*

Humane Society of Canada

*Association of Early
Childhood Educators,
Ontario*

*United Steel Workers of
America*

*Canadian Environmental
Law Association*

Great Lakes United

*Breast Cancer Prevention
Coalition*

Pesticide Free Ontario

*Toronto Environmental
Alliance*

*Women's Healthy
Environments Network*

April 1, 2003

Media Release

Medical Officer of Health Details Bylaw to Ban Pesticides

(Toronto) Doctors, nurses, lawyers, and environmentalists congratulated the Medical Officer of Health for proposing a pesticide bylaw for the City of Toronto, and urged the Board of Health to adopt the by-law. Dr. Sheela Basrur detailed a bylaw to prohibit the use of pesticides on outdoor properties in a report going to the Board of Health for consideration on April 7th. The proposed bylaw would mean an end to cosmetic pesticide use on lawns, gardens, and other green-spaces by spring 2004.

"I commend Dr. Basrur for proposing a bylaw that will protect our children, our communities and our environment from unnecessary exposures to these dangerous chemicals," said Ms. Janet Kasperski, RN, Executive Director of the **Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP)**. OCFP is a member of the **Partnership for Pesticide Bylaws**, a network of health, labour and environment organizations supporting a pesticide bylaw.

Pesticide use to protect public health, such as for allergens or diseases like West Nile Virus, is not restricted under the bylaw. The bylaw also allows home-owners to address extreme infestations that might result in permanent damage to property.

"Studies have linked common lawn care pesticides with cancers such as non-Hodgkins lymphoma, as well as neurological and reproductive problems. There are too many risks associated these chemicals to warrant their use for weed-free lawns," said Dr. Hilary de Veber, Pediatrician and member of the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**, "We urge the City to pass this bylaw now."

The proposed bylaw is the result of a year-long public consultation. The by-law is clearly supported by residents of Toronto. Three recent public opinion polls indicated that between 70 and 80 per cent of Toronto residents support a pesticide by-law. The bylaw is also strongly supported by labour as it will result in safer working environments for many outdoor workers.

"Banning pesticides will benefit the health of pets, wildlife and the environment," according to Michael O'Sullivan, Executive Director of The **Humane Society of Canada**.

The Supreme Court of Canada stated in the Hudson, Quebec bylaw case that "law-making and implementation are often best achieved at a level of government that is not only effective, but also closest to the citizens affected and thus most responsive to their needs, to local distinctiveness, and to population diversity."

"A pesticide bylaw is best situated at the municipal level so that it can respond to the needs of Toronto's community," said Theresa McClenaghan, legal counsel for the **Canadian Environmental Law Association**.

The Board of Health will consider the bylaw on April 7th, before going to Committees and then City Council for consideration in May.

For information contact: Ms. Janet Kasperski, RN: 416 -867-9646 ext. 27
Dr. Hilary De Veber: 416-469-2584
Theresa McClenaghan: 416-960-2284 ext. 218