

The Steward

Dr. Ted Boadway continues to lead the way in anti-tobacco and air pollution policies.

It has always been about saving lives and improving Ontarians' quality of life for Dr. Ted Boadway, former executive director of environmental health policy at the Ontario Medical Association (OMA). During his tenure, he left an indelible mark on anti-tobacco and environmental policies across the province.

Dr. Boadway has inspired physicians to get more involved with the fight against air pollution, from patient advisories to the advocacy of more research and health education material. Also instrumental in Ontario's Clinical Tobacco Intervention (CTI) Program, he helped form a groundbreaking second-hand smoke strategy, where pharmacists, physicians and dentists are assisted as they try to lower patients' tobacco intake.

"The OMA has always had a focus on population health issues. It was just my job to continue that focus and express it differently," says Dr. Boadway, who officially retired from his post in January. "I was happy to be the agent of this. If I can say that I've helped my colleagues to look after their patients better, that's probably the most valuable thing I can do."

Described as a knowledgeable, compassionate steward, Dr. Boadway ensured medical professionals, via the OMA, were actively involved and played leadership roles, according to Tom Magyarody, the executive director and CEO of the Ontario Dental Association.

"He is well respected as a source of 'wise counsel.' His impact on physicians' overall behaviour and public health policy—regardless of the party in power—has been felt by all," says Magyarody, who was once the OMA's executive director of corporate affairs and administration.

The papers Dr. Boadway co-authored clearly outline the adverse health effects of ground-level ozone, particulates and acid aerosols. They are intrinsically linked to respiratory and cardiac disease. With more atmospheric pollution, hospitalizations and premature mortalities have steadily risen. In Ontario alone 5,800 smog-related deaths were reported in 2005. An additional 45,000 deaths in Canada are attributable to smoking, which remains the most preventable cause of disease and death in Canada.



Dr. Ted Boadway

Today, Dr. Boadway's calls for more stringent sulphur- and nitrogen-oxide emission limits have been heeded. He continues to chair Ontario's Executive Committee on Trans-boundary Air Pollution. As well, he remains an active member of the Smoke-free Ontario Campaign Committee, which aims to reduce tobacco consumption by 20% within two years, by combining provincial legislation with community programs in schools, workplaces and other settings. For his "exemplary work" in tobacco control, he received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and was made an honorary member of the OMA.

But Dr. Boadway also acknowledges his many partners along the way, including members of Ontario's parliament and the medical profession, whom he calls the "backbone of anti-tobacco and air pollution policies.

"You actually have the feeling of having done something worthwhile when this recognition comes," says Dr. Boadway. "The sea change in public opinion during the last 15 year has been remarkable.... The Canadian public now really has the message that environmental pollution is harmful to health. And we helped them get that message."
—Kevin Spurgaitis

This award is presented by Healthcare Benefit Trust