



Sandusky County Increasing Options for Clean, Smoke-Free Living in Multi-Unit Housing

Summary

Demand for Smoke-Free environments is on the rise. Ohioans are protected from secondhand smoke in virtually all enclosed workplaces and public places, yet many remain exposed in their own homes as a result of smoke from neighboring units. In partnership between the Sandusky Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Sandusky County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, a Smoke-Free policy has been implemented in all 48 public housing units of the Day Woods Housing Community located in Fremont, Ohio.

Challenge

Data collected from the 2016-2017 Sandusky County Community Health Assessment indicated that nearly one in five (19 percent) of Sandusky County adults are current smokers. Adult smokers were more likely to

be under the age of 30 (47 percent), have incomes less than \$25,000 (37 percent), and rate their overall health as fair or poor (35 percent). Although 81 percent of adults are not current smokers, one in four nonsmokers are still bearing the negative health effects that result from secondhand smoke exposure. Secondhand smoke exposure is even more common among children ages 3 to 11, African-Americans, people living below the poverty level, and those who rent multi-unit housing. Even if tenants do not smoke themselves or live with a smoker, they can still be exposed to secondhand smoke from seepage through walls, wiring, plumbing, ventilation systems and under doors. This exposure poses serious health threats to children and adults including a heightened risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), more frequent and severe asthma attacks, and increased respiratory symptoms

and infections. It is estimated that secondhand smoke caused nearly 34,000 heart disease deaths and more than 7,300 lung cancer deaths each year during 2005–2009 among adult nonsmokers in the United States. According to the Surgeon General Report *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke* (www.cdc.gov/tobacco), there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure, therefore the only way to protect the nonsmokers is to eliminate smoking in all homes, worksites and public spaces.

Solution

Sandusky County CHC partnered with the Sandusky County Metropolitan Housing Authority in developing and implementing a Smoke-Free policy for the Day Woods Multi-Unit Housing Community. The CHC program began their efforts by providing a resident opinion



survey to gauge tenant support for Smoke-Free living. Results from the survey identified that 50 percent of the Day Woods residents were in favor of the property adopting an indoor Smoke-Free policy. As part of the housing community's implementation plan, the Sandusky County Health Department (SCHD) held a resident meeting to provide education and information on the effects of smoking and secondhand smoke exposure. SCHD also provided local cessation resources to residents who wanted to quit smoking prior to the implementation of the Smoke Free policy.

Results

Because people spend so much time in their homes, making multi-unit housing Smoke-Free plays an important role in reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. The Day Woods Multi-Unit Housing Community has successfully implemented an indoor Smoke-Free policy in all 48 units impacting more than 144 residents. A three-tiered fine system is part of the policy to help with compliance, however, the Smoke-Free buildings have been a success so far with residents not smoking indoors and also making their guests aware of the policy as well. The decision to go Smoke-Free was made easy due to the numerous health benefits and the cost savings associated with it. Smoke-Free signage has been posted on the main Day Woods sign as well as signage posted throughout the multi-unit housing property. The newly developed partnership between the Sandusky Metropolitan Housing Authority and the health department's CHC program has allowed health educators to connect residents with resources that support and promote healthy lifestyles.

Sustaining Success

While the Sandusky County CHC Program will remain available as a resource to the Day Woods Multi-Unit Housing Community, they also have plans to expand their efforts to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing. In 2018, CHC will work with a second multi-unit housing community on developing and implementing a smoke-free policy. In addition to these prevention efforts, SCHD recently acquired a Community Cessation Initiative (CCI) grant from the Ohio Department of Health which will fill tobacco cessation service gaps, and offer central coordination, referral, and follow-up for the Sandusky County area.

Your Involvement is Key

- You can protect yourself, your family, and your community from secondhand smoke by:
 - Quitting smoking if you are not already a nonsmoker
 - Not allowing anyone to smoke anywhere in or near your home
 - Not allowing anyone to smoke in your car, even with the windows down
 - Making sure your children's day care center and schools are Tobacco-Free
 - Making others aware if they are violating a Smoke-Free policy
 - Teaching your children to stay away from secondhand smoke
 - Being a good role model by not smoking or using any other type of tobacco
- To learn more about the Sandusky County CHC coalition work with tobacco, active living and healthy eating initiatives visit <http://www.alwayschoosehealth.com/health-planning-chc> .
- To become more involved with tobacco prevention and control in your community, contact Charlotte Stonerook.



"With the new Smoke-Free policy in place, I decided now was the time to quit smoking and use the tools given to help quit."

— *Melanie, Day Woods resident*



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