



SAINT PAUL - RAMSEY COUNTY  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL AND THE RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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May 3, 2010

TO: Mr. Jon Gutzmann, Executive Director

FROM: Hanna Cooper, Chairperson *AC*  
Saint Paul - Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory  
Committee

RE: **Recommendation for Consideration and Action**

The Saint Paul – Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory Committee (CHSAC) is a 23-member committee of health and allied-health professionals that advises the Ramsey County Board and City of Saint Paul Council on issues related to public health.

For the past eight months the committee has focused meeting agendas on topics related to the State Health Improvement Program (SHIP). The Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health received a two-year grant from the Statewide Health Improvement (SHIP) Program to reduce the burden of chronic disease caused by obesity and tobacco use and exposure. SHIP interventions focus on creating environments (e.g., schools, neighborhoods, worksites, clinics and housing facilities) where healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity are accessible and exposure to cigarette smoke is eliminated.

One of Ramsey County's goals is to partner with landlords of low income, multi-unit housing to pass voluntary smoke-free housing policies.

Based on presentations by public health department staff and other experts and discussions by the Committee members, the attached recommendation has been developed for consideration and action by the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the possibility of implementing smoke-free policies for some or all of the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency properties. Please contact Richard D. Ragan, Public Health Department staff to the Community Health Services Advisory Committee, at 651-266-2454 and he will contact me.

cc: Rob Fulton, Director of Public Health

**Resolution  
of the Saint Paul-Ramsey County  
Community Health Services Advisory Committee**

**Regarding smoke-free polices for St. Paul Public Housing Agency properties**

Whereas, the U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that the scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke;<sup>1</sup> and

Whereas, secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and in adults who do not smoke;<sup>2</sup> and

Whereas, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers has concluded that the only means of effectively eliminating health risk associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity;<sup>3</sup> and

Whereas, secondhand smoke causes almost 50,000 deaths in adult non-smokers in the United States each year, including approximately 3,400 from lung cancer and another 22,000 to 69,000 from heart disease;<sup>4</sup> and

Whereas, people spend more time in their homes than in any other location;<sup>5</sup> and

Whereas, the St. Paul Housing Agency has a goal of providing safe, affordable housing and a 2010 Agency Goal of improving properties to promote fire safety and life safety as well as preserving the asset;<sup>6</sup> and

Whereas, fires caused by smoking are the leading cause of deaths in multifamily buildings;<sup>7</sup> and

Whereas, the turnover costs associated with apartments vacated by smokers are substantially higher than apartments occupied by non-smokers;<sup>8</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. *ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke*. June 25, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Notice: PIH-2009-21 (HA)*. Office of Public and Indian Housing and Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control. July 17, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Table 1. Time spent in primary activities and percent of the civilian population engaging in each activity, averages per day by sex, 2008 annual averages*. Economic News Release.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Paul Housing Agency, *Goals*, available at <http://www.stpaulpha.org/goals.html>.

<sup>7</sup> HUD, *supra* note 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*



Whereas, elderly residents over the age of 62 and youth between the ages of 0-17 represent 54% of public housing residents, populations that are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of exposure to secondhand smoke;<sup>9</sup> and

Whereas, elderly residents 62 and over and youth 17 and younger comprise a majority of Saint Paul Public Housing Agency residents;<sup>10</sup> and

Whereas, nearly three quarters (72%) of Americans with incomes under \$20,000 a year are non-smokers<sup>11</sup> and 76.8% of Minnesotans with a household income under \$35,000 are non-smokers or former smokers;<sup>12</sup>

Whereas, smoking rates are low in those populations disproportionately represented in low-income housing: more than 90% of persons age 65 and older do not smoke; more than 75% of African Americans do not smoke; and approximately 85% of Hispanics are non-smokers;<sup>13</sup> and

Whereas, numerous surveys, including a 2009 survey of Twin Cities renters, have demonstrated that low-income renters would prefer to live in smoke-free apartments;<sup>14</sup> and

Whereas, approximately 135 public housing authorities around the country have adopted some form of smoke-free policy, including housing authorities in Seattle, Washington; Helena, Montana; Bangor, Maine; Lincoln, Nebraska; Boulder, Colorado; Portland, Oregon; and 32 housing authorities in Minnesota;<sup>15</sup> and

Whereas, the U.S. Surgeon General in June of 2009 published a “Call to Action to Promote Healthy Home,” stating that “adopting smoke-free rules in homes reduces involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke and improves health;<sup>16</sup> and

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<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Resident Characteristic Report for St. Paul*. December 31, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital and Health Statistics, *Summary of Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2006*, Series 10, Number 235 Table XV, p. 135 (December 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Tobacco Use in Minnesota: 1999-2007, Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey, full report available at [http://www.mntobacco.nonprofitoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={ECE0A1FF-DC5A-4C9C-AA08-8E9A97B14D07}](http://www.mntobacco.nonprofitoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={ECE0A1FF-DC5A-4C9C-AA08-8E9A97B14D07}).

<sup>13</sup> *Cigarette Smoking Among Adults and Trends in Smoking Cessation—United States, 2008*. MMWR, November 13, 2009, 58(44); 1227-1232.

<sup>14</sup> Full report available at [http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org/documents/2009\\_Metro\\_tenants\\_SHS\\_survey\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org/documents/2009_Metro_tenants_SHS_survey_final_report.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Full listing available at <http://www.tcsg.org/sfelp/home.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General 19 (2009).

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC) published its Healthy Homes Strategic Plan in June 2009 that listed smoke-free housing as a critical public health need and stated that OHHLHC “will continue to support...efforts within assisted housing by collaborating with the program offices to encourage further adoption of smoke free policies;”<sup>17</sup> and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Public and Indian Housing and the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control issued a Notice in July 2009 strongly encouraging “Public Housing Authorities...to implement non-smoking policies in some or all of their public housing units;”<sup>18</sup>

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory Committee:

That the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory Committee strongly encourages the St. Paul Public Housing Agency to implement smoke-free policies for some or all of its properties.

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Leading Our Nation to Healthier Homes: The Healthy Homes Strategic Plan*. Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control 17 (June 2009).

<sup>18</sup> HUD, *supra* note 4.





## Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health April 2010

### **SMOKE-FREE COMMUNITIES**

#### **Position Statement:**

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Department of Public Health supports smoke-free communities in order to: create clean, safe environments that encourage healthy choices; support the efforts of smokers to quit; and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS).

#### **Background:**

- Surgeon General reports have described how smoking causes cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic bronchitis, and reproductive effects. Through the years, that list has expanded to include cataracts, pneumonia, acute myeloid leukemia, abdominal aortic aneurysm, stomach cancer, pancreatic cancer, cervical cancer, kidney cancer and periodontitis. The report also concludes that quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits, reducing risks for disease and improving general health. <sup>1</sup>
- Evidence suggests that smoking bans help to support smokers who are trying to quit as well as reduce their overall cigarette consumption. <sup>2</sup>
- According to a 2006 study, 54% of smokers who had tried to quit found that seeing someone with a cigarette was a trigger to relapse, while 40% said that smelling a cigarette was a trigger to relapse. <sup>3</sup>
- Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS) absorb nicotine and other compounds. SHS is listed as a Group A carcinogen and there is no safe level of exposure. The greater the exposure to secondhand smoke the greater the level of these harmful compounds in the body. <sup>4</sup>
- SHS exposure causes disease and premature death in adults and children who do not smoke. Substantial evidence links exposure to SHS with a range of serious and life threatening health impacts, including heart disease, cancer, asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory problems. According to the Surgeon General, people who are exposed to second hand smoke on a daily basis have a 25% to 30% higher risk of heart disease and a 20% to 30% higher risk of lung cancer. <sup>1</sup>
- Because their respiratory, immune, and nervous systems are still developing, children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of SHS. It is estimated that SHS is responsible for 202,300 asthma episodes and 790,000 doctor visits for U.S. children with ear infections annually. <sup>1</sup>
- Just thirty minutes of exposure to SHS can cause heart damage. Nonsmokers' heart arteries showed a reduced ability to dilate, diminishing the ability to get life-giving blood. In that same time frame, SHS activates blood platelets, which can initiate the process of atherosclerosis. <sup>5</sup>
- SHS is the third leading cause of preventable death in this country, killing 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. each year. <sup>6</sup>
- While most SHS evidence relates to indoor exposure, there is emerging evidence on how smoking negatively affects air quality in outdoor locations. <sup>7</sup>

- A study which measured cigarette smoke levels in a variety of outdoor locations showed that a person sitting near a smoker in an outdoor area could be exposed to levels of cigarette smoke similar to the exposure of someone sitting in an indoor tavern where smoking is allowed.<sup>8</sup>
- Using controlled experiments, researchers have found that outdoor tobacco smoke levels did not approach background levels until about 23 feet from the source.<sup>9</sup>
- Smoking in entryways poses a continued health risk because workers and customers are subjected to SHS when they enter or leave the building. SHS can also drift into buildings or be sucked in by powerful ventilation systems. Smoke-free zones provide a buffer around entryways, windows, and ventilation areas to reduce smoke exposure.<sup>10</sup>
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems can distribute SHS throughout a building.<sup>1</sup>
- In addition to the health impacts, cigarette trash is an environmental issue. Cigarette butts are one of the most common items found in urban litter and butts take around five years to break down.<sup>11</sup>
- Cigarettes are a fire hazard. They are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. Nearly one of every four U.S. fire deaths can be attributed to cigarettes.<sup>12</sup>

#### References:

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