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FEDERAL PROPOSAL MOVES PUBLIC HOUSING IN A SMOKE-FREE DIRECTION

Four out of five non-smokers would prefer a smoke-free building policy; Two out of four Pinellas public housing authorities ahead of the curve



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Floridians living in standardized public housing may be breathing easier soon, as Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julian Castro has introduced a smoke-free policy in HUD-affiliated public housing authorities nationwide.

The Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida (BTFF), the state's comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation program, has been working to educate public and private housing managers about the benefits of smoke-free policies for more than three years and is encouraged by this development.

"Smoke-free public housing is another step in the right direction to improve the health of children, adults and families who are disproportionately affected by tobacco," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "We also know that implementing smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing produces benefits for the properties including reduced maintenance and turnover costs and fewer resident disputes related to smoking neighbors."

The bureau's list of multi-unit properties that have enacted voluntary smoke-free policies has grown to more than 1,000 properties since tracking began in 2010. Public housing units have also been making the change.

Pinellas County has four public housing authorities (PHA) and is well ahead of the curve with both the Clearwater and St. Petersburg PHAs already smoke-free. A third, the Pinellas County Housing Authority, with the county's largest number of units, has made more than 300 units smoke-free to date and is the process of moving toward smoke-free communities for all its developments. All units will be smoke-free well ahead of HUD guidelines.

Benefits of smoke-free buildings include:

- **Better health.** Smoke-free air laws decrease secondhand smoke exposure among nonsmokers, reduce heart attack and asthma hospitalizations and encourage smokers to quit.¹
- **Increased safety.** Smoke-free policies reduce fire risks for residents, owners and property managers.²
- **Decreased secondhand smoke exposure.** Secondhand smoke can travel from other units through doorways, cracks in walls, electrical lines, plumbing and ventilation systems.^{3,4}

Smokers residing in HUD-affiliated public housing should be aware that it is difficult, but not impossible, to quit smoking. In fact, 63.5 percent of adults who have ever smoked have quit, and there are more former smokers in Florida than current smokers.⁵ Having a comprehensive quit plan increases the success rate. Tobacco Free Florida offers 3 Ways to Quit, which are free and easy to access:

- **CALL:** Call Tobacco Free Florida at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- **CLICK:** Tobacco Free Florida's online cessation tool can be accessed at tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach.
- **COME IN:** In person help is available with the help of Area Health Education Centers, find one near you at tobaccofreeflorida.com/ahec

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¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Homes Manual: Smoke-Free Policies in Multiunit Housing. 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/Healthy_Homes_Manual_WEB.pdf

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Homes Manual: Smoke-Free Policies in Multiunit Housing. 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/Healthy_Homes_Manual_WEB.pdf

³ Pizacani, B et al. Moving Multiunit Housing Providers Toward Adoption of Smoke-Free Policies. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2011;8(1). http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/jan/10_0015.htm

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Homes Manual: Smoke-Free Policies in Multiunit Housing. 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/Healthy_Homes_Manual_WEB.pdf

⁵ Tobacco Free Florida <http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/fact-database/>