Smoking Policy Questions and Answers

Q: I currently smoke. Does this mean I have to quit

A: No. These policies only requires that you refrain from the use of tobacco products at any facility owned or operated by the Health Department and from using tobacco products outside designated tobacco zones. This encompasses all employees, clients, volunteers, contracted employees and visitors from the use of tobacco products while on property.

Q: I would like to quit smoking. Where Can I get help?

A: There are several options and services available for Smoking Cessation Initiatives:

(1) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

(2) Florida Department of Health Quitline telephone- base service: Toll Free (**1-877-822-6669**) offering counseling sessions, self-help materials, pharmacotherapy assistance- (Patches, Gum).

(3) Employees can contact the Tobacco Prevention Specialist to receive an informational Stop Smoking packet and details on the free community Stop-Smoking classes available throughout the county.

(4) Employees can contact their insurance providers for available services including discounted/waivers for the purchases of nicotine replacement therapies (NRT's) products for assistance in quitting smoking. (Nicotine Patch, Nicotine Gum, Nicotine Inhaler, Nicotine Nasal Spray, Nicotine Lozenge, Zyban and Chantix)

Additional Resources:
National Organizations and websites:

American Heart Association
Toll-free number: 1-800-242-8721 (1-800-AHA-USA-1)
Web site: www.americanheart.org

American Stroke Association
Toll-free number: 1-888-478-7653 (1-888-4-STROKE)
Web site: www.strokeassocation.org

American Lung Association
Toll-free number: 1-800-548-8252) (1-800-LUNG-USA)
Web site: www.lungusa.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office on Smoking and Health
Toll-free number: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
Web site: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm

National Cancer Institute
Toll-free number: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
Web site: www.cancer.gov

Nicotine Anonymous
Toll-free number: 1-877-879-6422
Web site: www.nicotine-anonymous.org

Smokefree.gov
(Online materials, including info on state telephone-based programs)
Toll-free number: 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUITNOW)
Web site: www.smokefree.gov

Q: Can I smoke in my car while parked on CHD property?

A: Employees are not allowed to smoke in personal vehicles parked within site boundaries of the Health Department properties and outside the smoking designated areas. Employees who have the need to smoke or use tobacco products during the work day will be required to do so off property. Employees may leave the premises for the purpose of using tobacco products only when they are not on duty. Failure to refrain from use of tobacco in areas visible to the public could result in lack of public confidence in anti-smoking messages of the facility.

Q: Am I allowed to smoke on breaks?

A: Employees who choose to use tobacco within the permitted areas must do so on their work breaks or meal periods.
Work breaks: Breaks of up to 15 minutes may be allowed once during the first half of a shift and again during the second half of the work shift. Work breaks are considered to be time worked and employees may not leave the premises during their work breaks.
Note: Effective March 2010, smoking on a work break will not be allowed. A work break is considered time on the clock and therefore an employee cannot leave the premise during that time. Work breaks cannot be combined (30 minutes total instead of two 15 minute breaks) and it is not mandatory that DOH provide work breaks

Q: What is the purpose?

A: This policy is designed to promote, protect, and improve the health and safety of patients, visitors, and employees of the Osceola County Health Department/Primary Care Medical Services Poinciana, Inc. referred to as the Health Department. Through maintaining a tobacco free environment the Health Department sets an example to businesses, community leaders, and organizations, and residents of Osceola County.

Q: How will these policies be enforced?

A: All employees share the responsibility for adhering to the policies and to ensure that visitors and clients comply with all provisions of these policies. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the appropriate supervisor and handled according to the corrective action procedures outlined in these policies.

Q: ***What about individual rights?***
A: Your individual right to choose to smoke is respected. You are not being asked to quit smoking. However, to create a healthy environment for employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors, we ask that individuals not smoke on our properties.

Q: Where can I find a copy of these policies?
A: The policies (Tobacco Free Policy) and (Tobacco Usage Policy) are located on the intranet (SharePoint), and refer to the OCHD Employee Handbook and included in for all new hirer information. As well as contacting the Environment Safety Committee and the Tobacco Prevention Specialist for a copy.

Q: How will visitors be notified of the policies?
A: Visitors will be informed of these policies through: signs posted at the property entrances and upon entrance to the buildings, a tobacco free environment.

Q: ***Why are we initiating these policies now?***
A: These policies have been established to protect and promote the health and well being of employees, clients and visitors of the Osceola County Health Department/Primary Care Medical Services of Poinciana, Inc. referred to as Health Department. Tobacco use is the single largest cause of preventable, premature death in the U.S. More than 70% of tobacco users want to quit, and worksite policies like this are one of the most effective ways to help them accomplish their goal. These policies reduce the harm, costly illnesses, and health hazards to smokers and non-smokers.

Q: When do these policies goes into effect?
A: Effective March 2010 all our grounds will be smoke-free including parking lots and private vehicles.

All employees are encouraged to be supportive and respectful as co-workers who smoke make the transition to the new policy. Smoking is a powerful addiction, and people who smoke will probably be trying different strategies to see how they can best comply with the new policy.