

Important Information and Assistance for the Transition to a Tobacco-Free Environment

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does tobacco-free campus mean?

A: Effective November 20, 2008, smoking and the use of tobacco products (includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and pipe smoking) are not permitted by anyone on the campus of Trinitas Regional Medical Center, any Trinitas owned/leased properties, or in hospital owned/leased vehicles.

Q: Why is Trinitas now a tobacco-free campus?

A: As a major provider of health care in the community, we are committed to leading by example and creating a healthy environment for our patients, visitors, employees and volunteers who are on our campus.

Q: Are other hospitals becoming tobacco-free?

A: Yes. This is a growing trend among hospitals nationwide to become completely tobacco-free and eliminate designated smoking areas. In New Jersey approximately 30 percent of hospitals have already adopted smoke-free or tobacco-free campus policies.

Q: To whom does the policy apply?

A: All persons, including employees, volunteers, students, patients, visitors, vendors, contractors and others who work in or visit hospital buildings, parking lots and grounds.

Q: Where on the campus does the tobacco-free policy apply? Is smoking allowed inside cars?

A: Tobacco use is prohibited on all areas of the campus, inside and outside, including inside cars that are parked on hospital property.

Q: Isn't smoking a personal legal right?

A: We are not asking employees, visitors and patients to quit using tobacco products but to refrain from using tobacco products while visiting or working at Trinitas.

Q: How will visitors and patients be notified?

A: Extensive signage will be in place by November 20, 2008, and various other methods of communication will be in place to ensure that visitors and patients are aware of the policy.

Q: Why can't we have smoking huts that are designated outdoor locations?

A: Smoking and secondhand smoke are known health hazards. As a health care institution, we are committed to healing illness and promoting wellness. Allowing smoking on our campus, even in designated areas, is not consistent with this commitment. We do not want our patients, visitors and employees to be exposed to secondhand smoke while on our campus.

Q: What kind of support is being offered to employees?

A: Trinitas is offering all actively employed benefit eligible employees a one time benefit that provides for up to \$100 in reimbursement toward any smoking cessation counseling program, prescription drug reimbursement, prescription patch reimbursement, laser and/or acupuncture treatment that the employee successfully completes and incurs during the six (6) month period between November 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009. To receive reimbursement under this program, simply submit a detailed receipt for the covered services to Barbara Gates, Benefits Director, by May 15, 2009. Also, all employees, including our non-benefit eligible employees can participate in free smoking cessation classes, including those available through our Employee Health/Occupational Medicine Department. To learn more about these free programs, simply call (908) 994-5368.

Q: How will the tobacco-free policy be enforced?

A: All employees are accountable and responsible for using appropriate protocol for occasions when they encounter any person using tobacco products on the hospital campus. (See script examples)



Q: What do I do if a visitor or patient becomes angry or disruptive because of the policy or being asked to stop using tobacco on the campus?

A: Be polite and calm. Avoid confrontation. If talking to a visitor, calmly say, "I understand that you are upset. I am very sorry this is difficult. Please know that other staff members will likely ask you to stop using tobacco on our campus."

Q: What is my responsibility as a manager related to the tobacco-free policy?

A: Management responsibilities include:

- Understand and follow the policy yourself.
- Discuss the policy with your employees and encourage their questions.
- Enforce the policy uniformly and fairly with all employees as well as medical staff, visitors, and patients.
- Support your employees' efforts to inform patients, visitors, and other employees about the policy, resources and options.
- Be respectful of the employees who use tobacco, letting them know about the available resources Trinitas is providing.

Q: As a manager, what should I do if an employee leaves his or her work area for an extended period of time to smoke?

A: Employees who exceed the allocated time for breaks and lunch for any reason must be addressed by the manager or supervisor of that area. Managers are expected to enforce break and lunch time limits, as well as the off-unit and time clock policies. Excessive absence from the workstation should result in the usual corrective action for the employee.

Q: What do I do if I see an employee who is violating the policy?

A: Politely say, "This campus is now tobacco-free." Be supportive and respectful. Let them know that you must report the violation to their manager. Any employee who refuses to comply with the policy will face corrective action.

Q: Will our smoking policy be explained to job applicants?

A: Recruiters will inform job applicants and new hires of Trinitas tobacco-free campus policy. The policy will also be reviewed at New Employee Orientation.

Scripting/Role-Playing Exercises

These scripts are intended to help staff become more comfortable discussing the tobacco-free environment policy with other staff, visitors, and patients in a respectful and supportive manner. You should take time during a staff meeting to share this information with your employees and conduct actual role-playing exercises.

Outdoor Encounters

If you see a person using tobacco products on Trinitas property, introduce yourself and say, "Excuse me Sir/Ma'am, I just wanted to let you know that for the health and safety of our patients, visitors, and employees, all of our grounds and parking areas are tobacco-free. If you wish to continue your tobacco use, you will have to leave Trinitas grounds. Thank you."

Why are you making me leave hospital property?

"For your health and the health of others, we are a tobacco-free campus. Many of our patients who come to Trinitas have cancer or respiratory problems, and their health is affected by secondhand smoke. We feel we should be providing them an environment free from the impact of secondhand smoke."

Can I (staff) use tobacco in my vehicle?

"The policy states no staff member is to use tobacco products in their vehicle on Trinitas property or on company time."

Can I (visitor) use tobacco in my vehicle?

"We ask that you would respect our policy and not use tobacco products while on our property."

What are you going to do if I continue to smoke here?

"Tobacco use is not permitted on Trinitas property. Please extinguish your cigarette." (Then walk away).
If this behavior continues, notify Security.

I have to have a cigarette! My loved one is very ill or just passed away.

"I am sorry about your loved one. Is there something I can do to help? Can I find someone to assist you?"

If you are a smoker, you may choose to show more empathy because you truly understand the impact of not being able to smoke.

"I understand your frustration. Our tobacco-free policy has required me to make some changes, too. I'm sorry this is causing you additional stress."