

Tobacco Free Campus Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

On July 4, 2006, Scotland Health Care System and all property owned or leased by the Hospital will become tobacco-free. Tobacco of all types will be prohibited by anyone, including staff, patients, visitors, medical staff, students, contractors, and volunteers.

Q: *Why is Scotland Health Care System becoming tobacco-free?*

A: As a leader in health care, Scotland Health Care System has made a commitment to lead this effort in order to create a healthier community. Becoming a tobacco-free environment is a major step in this direction and modeling healthy behaviors is important to the health of our community. Many people are not aware how smoking impacts health care and recovery. By making our environment tobacco-free, we are addressing the single leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

Q: *Why was tobacco use selected versus other health risks?*

A: Here are a few facts:

- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking, nearly 450,000 smokers die each year. More deaths are caused by tobacco use than by alcohol, cocaine, crack, heroin, homicides, suicides, car crashes, fires and AIDS combined.
- Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable deaths in North Carolina. Two hundred thirty-four (234) North Carolinians die per week from tobacco use.
- Tobacco use is a factor in heart disease, cancer, stroke, fetal death and stillborns, and lung disease.
- Smokers have twice the risk of wound infections as nonsmokers.
- Smoking slows the body's healing process.
- More than 6.4 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they will make as adolescents – the decision to smoke cigarettes.

Q: *Isn't using tobacco a personal legal right?*

A: The decision to use tobacco is not a right, but it is a legal personal choice and we respect that. However, organizations have the legal right to ban tobacco use on their property, and for the sake of our patients, visitors, and staff, we are invoking that right.

Q: *How does this new policy differ from our existing tobacco use policy?*

A: Smoking is currently allowed in designated smoking areas. Effective July 4, 2006, tobacco use of all types, including smokeless tobacco, will be prohibited anywhere on the System's campuses.

Q: *What does this policy change mean for associates?*

A: With the new tobacco-free environment policy, associates and spouses who use tobacco products are encouraged to enroll in a tobacco cessation program offered on the campus of the System. The cost of the program is reimbursed following 6 months of being tobacco-free and nicotine replacement substances are covered free of charge.

Associates who continue to use tobacco on System property will meet the standard disciplinary action to address a policy violation, up to and including discharge.

In addition, we have revised our Human Resources Policy 912-B-7 related to meal and break periods. Effective with our tobacco-free environment policy, all non-exempt staff, smokers and nonsmokers, leaving the premises, with approval, for non-work related reasons during working hours, including meal and break periods, will clock out upon leaving and clock back in when returning.

Q: *Won't the move to a tobacco-free campus just send smokers to restrooms and/or their cars?*

A: While the potential exists and certainly against policy, we hope all will embrace the efforts to sustain a healthier environment for patients, families, associates, volunteers, and physicians. The smell of tobacco smoke is a trigger for those trying to quit or remain tobacco-free while they are in our buildings or on our campus. It is the responsibility of every associate to help our co-workers, our patients, and visitors in this process.

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

A: Signage will alert all visitors to our campus of the tobacco free policy. Patients will be notified in a variety of ways, including at pre-admission, in the admissions (registration) department, and even by their personal physician. All associates who see patients or visitors using tobacco on our property will be courteous in informing them of the tobacco free policy of the System and will be given a script to help facilitate this process. Our Security staff will also be given the task of courteously enforcing the policy and will be provided with resources to make enforcements as easy as possible.

Q: *What do I say to someone I see using tobacco products while on the property?*

A: Try stating the following:

"Excuse me sir (or ma'am). My name is _____ and I'm a Scotland Health Care System associate. Perhaps you are unaware that we've recently become a tobacco-free campus and we really need your cooperation to make it work. Thank you very much and have a wonderful day!"

You can refer the person to our gift shop, subject to hours of operation, to purchase nicotine replacement substances.

Q: *What other hospitals in North Carolina have similar tobacco-free campus policies or are planning to implement a tobacco free campus?*

A: Currently, over 40 hospitals in North Carolina have passed 100% tobacco-free campus wide policies, including FirstHealth of the Carolinas (all facilities), Cape Fear Valley, Haywood Regional, High Point Regional, Pardee, Rutherford, Stanley Regional, Grace Hospital, and Pitt County Memorial Hospital. Most recently, Carolinas HealthCare System has announced they will go 100% tobacco-free campus wide for at all their facilities with an expected start date of November 16, 2006. They are the largest healthcare system in North Carolina to take this step.

Q: *How will Scotland educate patients, visitors, and the public about the new tobacco-free campus policy?*

A: Prior to and following July 4, we will continue to provide public information and educational materials about our tobacco-free campus policy. We are working closely with the media, both newspaper and radio, and will work closely with physician offices to educate patients and their families. New signage has been posted on all of our campuses.

Q: *Given the stress that families face during hospitalization, how will Scotland address this issue?*

A: Our intent is to intervene, educate, and heal through tobacco cessation resources that will assist patients and family members when they are here. Patients, via physician orders, will have the option of receiving nicotine replacement therapy during the hospitalization. Family members, visitors, and staff will have access to nicotine replacement substances (gum, lozenges, mint pouches) purchased through the hospital gift shop.

Q: *What external resources are available for those who wish to quit smoking or using tobacco products?*

A: Various hotlines and websites are available as resources:

- NC Quit Now 1-800-784-8669
- American Cancer Society 1-800-227-2345
- American Lung Association 1-800-586-4872
- www.quitnownc.org
- www.tobaccofreenurses.org
- www.lungusa.org
- www.quitnet.com