



Benefits of a Tobacco-Free Campus

Smoke-free is a buzzword in places of employment, but have you considered going tobacco-free? Eliminating all tobacco products from the worksite fosters a supportive environment for changing culture. By changing the culture of tobacco acceptance you create a new set of influences that will help employees adopt and maintain healthier behaviors that can reduce your healthcare expenses.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. All types of tobacco products are harmful, regardless of how they are consumed. Smokeless tobacco such as chewing tobacco, snus (a moist powder tobacco product) and snuff (nicotine product made of ground or pulverized tobacco leaves) is addictive and contains dozens of cancer-causing agents that can cause oral cancer among other diseases.

With cigarettes, secondhand smoke is the obvious risk associated with not having a smoke-free campus. Even if there are designated areas for employees to go and smoke outside, smoke travels and lingers so others can breathe it in. Secondhand smoke exposes non-smokers to the same risks a smoker. A smoke-free policy will have positive impact while offering the best protection from smoke at work.

Benefits of smoking cessation for employers and employees:

- Enhanced morale and image: Smoke-free workplace policies and initiatives to help employees give up smoking communicate that the employer cares about the health and safety of the community and its employees.
- Increased productivity and reduced medical costs: Control increased absenteeism and medical costs associated with smoking.
- Tobacco cessation counseling/treatment are among the highest ranked employee assistance services with the lowest costs.

In Wisconsin, nearly 7,000 people die annually from illnesses directly related to smoking, and another 751 die from illnesses and fires indirectly related to smoking. Implementing a smoke-free/tobacco-free campus will discourage people from smoking and have significant impact on reducing the estimated 625,000 annual deaths that occur in the U.S. from tobacco use each year.

For assistance in developing a more comprehensive wellness plan for your employees, contact Sharon Rateike, corporate wellness program coordinator at (920) 568-5018 or Sharon.Rateike@forthc.com.

