

Safety Rules as Miami-Dade Public Housing Goes Smoke-free in Florida

by: Frenslly S Melo

SUMMARY

In 2015, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Miami-Dade County helped 440 multi-unit public housing units go tobacco-free, protecting the 665 residents living in these units from the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke. These efforts are part of FDOH's plan to alleviate the effects of smoking and secondhand smoke – like heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and asthma – in the more than 18,000 residents living in Miami-Dade public housing. The work was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



CHALLENGE

Miami-Dade County is the largest public housing agency in Florida and sixth largest in the nation. Of the 5,047 households in public housing, 2,822 contain children and 2,727 are headed by women. A 2013 community needs assessment found that in Miami-Dade County 11.4% of adults smoked cigarettes at home at least four times a week in the past month and 6.8% of adults exposed to secondhand smoke are non-smokers. Smoking results in over 100,000 fires

a year, costing lives and millions in property loss. Residents living in multi-unit complexes are vulnerable to both smoking-related fires and secondhand smoke at home and from smoke that travels between units, across vents, and through doorways and cracks in the walls. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of low-birthweight, premature births, sudden infant death syndrome, and stunted growth and development.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Residents and staff members alike can ensure a healthy environment by reducing tobacco consumption and by supporting and guiding smoke-free strategies throughout complexes in both common areas and individual residences. Contact www.quitnow.net/florida or 1-877-YOU-CAN-NOW/1-877-822-6669. For more information about going smoke-free, visit <http://miamidade.floridahealth.gov/>.

"Since the policy went into effect, people are becoming more aware of where they smoke and how it affects others around them. There is less smoke odor inside the building, and overall the residents seem happy about the change."

- Lorena Roa, Property Manager at Jack Orr Plaza

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SOLUTION

Given the large number of public housing spaces in the Miami-Dade area, FDOH members developed smoke-free strategies to meet both resident needs and housing manager concerns. A resident survey revealed 84.7% support no-smoking protections and do not allow smoking in their home, 62.1% are troubled by others' tobacco use and the effects of secondhand smoke, and many are in support of the implementation of smoke/tobacco-free protections. Therefore, resident education is designed to address these issues. FDOH also met with local community leaders about educating public housing managers to implement smoke-free protections.

RESULTS

In 2015, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Miami-Dade County helped 440 multi-unit public housing units go tobacco-free, protecting the 665 residents living in these units from the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke. The FDOH also helped nine public housing complexes start educational campaigns to increase awareness, and two public housing properties incorporated smoke/tobacco-free strategies in their lease agreements. These results indicate that many residents and property managers are eager to curb and/or eliminate tobacco use and exposure. The FDOH's plan potentially saves the state \$3.4 million in healthcare costs and over half a million dollars in smoking-related fire damage annually. FDOH also projects a reduction in chronic diseases and improved quality of life as a result of better air quality.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
NCCDPHP

Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

To ensure that improvements have lasting effects on the community, FDOH's goal is to help all multi-unit complexes throughout Miami-Dade County implement smoke/tobacco-free strategies and link residents who want to quit tobacco use to cessation programs. The FDOH will continue to engage property managers and residents with the support of local community leaders to sustain tobacco cessation efforts. Moving forward, the FDOH will expand its reach by identifying additional property managers to gain support for smoke/tobacco-free strategies in private multi-unit properties.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
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