



# Frequently Asked Questions

## About HCMH's Tobacco-Free Campus

On July 1, 2007, Hancock County Memorial Hospital will adopt a tobacco-free campus policy for the hospital and clinics. Tobacco products are prohibited both indoors and outdoors on all properties owned by HCMH.

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**Q** *Why is HCMH going tobacco-free?*

**A** HCMH's mission is to provide an environment that is committed to health care—wellness and prevention as well as treatment. Modeling healthy behaviors is important to our patients, employees, and community.

**Q** *Why was smoking selected versus other health risks?*

- A** Smoking is the number one avoidable health risk today. Here are a few facts from the CDC:
- Over 440,000 people die each year from smoking related diseases—more than all alcohol, cocaine, crack, heroin, homicide, suicide, car crash, fire and AIDS deaths combined.
  - Smoking is a factor in heart disease, cancer, stroke and lung disease.
  - Cigarette smoking results in more than \$167 billion in costs annually, based on lost productivity (\$92.4 billion) and health care expenditures (\$75.5 billion).
  - Patients who smoke before surgery have twice the risk of infection of nonsmokers.
  - Smoking slows wound healing.
  - A smoker's broken bones take almost twice as long to heal.

**Q** *Where does the policy apply?*

**A** The policy states that all persons including employees, students, patients, visitors, contractors and others will refrain from tobacco use in HCMH buildings, clinics and parking lots.

**Q** *How is the policy enforced?*

**A** Violations of the policy will be handled according to the standard progressive disciplinary action procedures outlined in the employee policy manual.

**Q** *Why don't we continue to have designated smoking areas for employees, patients and visitors?*

**A** Providing a place to smoke does not support our goal to create a healthier environment for our patients, visitors and employees. We want to eliminate the triggers that make smoking cessation difficult.

Employees are also responsible for maintaining appropriate hygiene. This includes tobacco smells on clothes and body.

**Q** *If I am not to smoke while I'm here, what help can I get?*

**A** Our intent is to help and educate through smoking cessation resources that will assist patients, and employees. A variety of resources will be made available for those who do not smoke while they are here, including nicotine patches, gum and prescription medications.

Employees will be offered these options at a 50% discount up to \$500 until December 31, 2007. Tobacco cessation classes will be scheduled based on level of interest.

For more information, employees are asked to contact their supervisor.

Quitline Iowa offers free help in quitting tobacco at 1-866-U CAN TRY (822-6879) or visit their website at [www.quitlineiowa.org](http://www.quitlineiowa.org).

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 many cigarettes each day will probably be trying different strategies to see how they can best comply with the new policy.

