



WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

News about the Smoke-Free Environment, beginning Jan. 1, 2012 – brought to you by the Employee Wellness Committee.

Dear OMHS Family,

As a healthcare leader, Owensboro Medical Health System has made the decision to adopt smoke-free grounds to protect the health of our patients, visitors and employees—and to promote the health and safety of our community. Effective January 1, smoking on the grounds of the hospital or any OMHS facility in our 11-county service area will be prohibited.

Having smoke-free grounds will impact all of us. It will take teamwork to provide ongoing communication to patients, visitors and employees about our smoke-free facilities, as well as options for smoking cessation for anyone who wants to become a non-smoker. This newsletter contains the resources you will need, including answers to questions you or others may have, along with where you can find copies of supporting policies and resources for quitting smoking.

We've also posted a video that discusses the new smoke-free environment at www.MyOMHS.org.

If you smoke, we encourage you to consider how becoming a non-smoker will help you feel better, give you more energy and even save your hard-earned money. You'll decrease your risk for heart disease, lung cancer and sleep better. Even if you have smoked for several years you will reap benefits from quitting.

We realize that quitting smoking can be a real challenge; if you choose to quit we support you. If you continue smoking we acknowledge that is your personal choice. However, beginning January 1 you may not smoke on any OMHS property. In addition, the City of Owensboro has granted OMHS legal authority to enforce our smoke-free policy on all sidewalks bordering the Parrish Campus, HealthPark and Business Center. Employees will not be allowed to smoke anywhere on the grounds, in their vehicles parked on OMHS lots or on sidewalks bordering our properties.

Thank you for complying with our efforts to provide clean air for patients, families and visitors—and for supporting our mission to heal the sick and to improve the health of our community.



Jeff Barber, DrPH, FACHE
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Log on to
www.MyOMHS.org
to watch the video
about the new
smoke-free
environment and
for resources on
becoming a
non-smoker.



Wishing YOU Well...

Live well. Work well.

Quitters Can Be Winners

If you've tried to quit smoking on your own, you know how hard it can be, because nicotine is extremely addictive. Studies show you have a better chance of success if you have help.

- Talk with our wellness counselor at the OMHS HealthPark, call (270) 688-4856. A number of resources are available at no cost to you.
- Register to attend the Cooper Clayton Start to Stop Smoking program. It's free and will help you become a non-smoker. Call 270-688-0808 to register. The next session begins January 3 at the OMHS HealthPark. Sessions meet each Tuesday from 5:30 – 6:30 pm for 13 weeks.
- Contact a representative in Human Resource Development to find out how you qualify for reimbursement for a variety of nicotine replacement products. Call 270-685-7700.



Frequently Asked Questions Smoke-Free Environment Policy

Effective January 1, 2012, smoking will not be permitted on any property leased or owned by Owensboro Medical Health System (OMHS). This policy applies to all segments of the property, inside buildings, on the grounds, in vehicles parked on OMHS lots and any sidewalks that adjoin the premises.

Why has OMHS decided to move to smoke-free grounds?

Hospitals serve as vital and central leaders in their communities. By moving to smoke-free grounds, OMHS can provide an improved environment at all of its locations and further the health of the 11-county region we serve. We also recognize that smoking is the leading cause of disease and preventable death in the United States, along with mounting evidence that secondhand smoke poses a health risk to non-smokers. Establishing smoke-free grounds allows us to increase our involvement in helping patients, visitors and employees become non-smokers and protect others from secondhand smoke.

Why did the hospital choose to do away with designated smoking areas?

Providing areas to smoke does not support our goals and mission to create a healthier environment for our patients, their families, our employees and community. We need to effectively eliminate triggers that make becoming a non-smoker difficult, including designated smoking areas and structures. Such areas imply that OMHS approves of smoking.

How can employees, physicians and others best support the policy?

We all have roles to play in creating healthier communities. We ask that you to take an active position in educating others about the Smoke-Free Environment policy and tactfully ask anyone smoking to extinguish their cigarettes. We also ask that non-smokers provide encouragement to smokers to become non-smokers, while at the same time respecting that choosing to smoke away from OMHS property will remain a smoker's personal decision.

Can OMHS prohibit smoking in their vehicles? Isn't that a violation of personal choice?

We understand individuals may feel they have the right to smoke in their private vehicles. OMHS prohibits such activity on OMHS premises for employees or visitors. Smoking will not be permitted in a personal vehicle on OMHS grounds or in any vehicle owned or leased by OMHS.

Why are smokers being singled out? How does smoking differ from eating saturated fats, processed foods or using other products that pose health risks?

OMHS wants to provide employees with a healthier environment and lifestyle. While many things may create health risks, smoking has been identified for the following reasons:

- Smoking increases risk for the top four causes of death (heart disease, cancer, stroke and lung disease).
- Over 430,000 individuals die prematurely each year from smoking-related diseases.
- Patients who smoke regularly before surgery have twice the risk of wound infection as those of non-smokers. Smoking also inhibits wound healing.
- Smoking costs the United States about \$150 billion each year in healthcare and lost productivity.

What do OMHS policies say about the odor of smoke?

Employees are expected to arrive for work without a strong smell of colognes, perfumes, lotions, aftershave, smoke and/or body odor. For details, refer to the Professional Appearance Policy.

Why must employees clock-out when leaving the property?

Employees who take 30-minute non-paid meal breaks must clock out. Please check with your manager or supervisor if you have questions about this policy—or for more details, refer to the Breaks/Rest and Meal Breaks policy posted at www.MyOMHS.org.

How does OMHS expect leaders to support and enforce the policy?

OMHS expects all leaders to support and reinforce the policy by:

- Following the policy
- Discussing the new policy with employees
- Monitoring employees' compliance in relation to the policy, like any other company policy
- Taking appropriate action if an employee is in violation of the policy

How should employees approach visitors or patients who are smoking?

Employees who discover visitors or patients smoking should courteously inform them of the policy. Employees may also seek the assistance of security officers if necessary. You'll find the suggested responses for noncompliance on the back of this newsletter and at www.MyOMHS.org.

Is chewing or spitting tobacco permissible?

No. The Professional Appearance Policy prohibits employees from using chewing or spitting tobacco, including the use of snuff.

What nicotine replacement products are permissible for use on OMHS properties?

Nicotine patches, lozenges, gum (in some settings) and dissolvable pellets may be used. OMHS advises that individuals talk with their doctors about using nicotine replacement products.

Will OMHS reimburse employees for nicotine replacement therapy products, cessation programs or other services to support becoming a non-smoker?

Employees enrolled in an OMHS health insurance plan will have access to prescription and over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy products through the prescription plan at the generic co-pay rate. The Nicotine Replacement Policy provides coverage for employees not enrolled in the health plan.

What resources are available to employees who want to become non-smokers?

In addition to the sources in this booklet, employees may access smoking cessation information from www.MyOMHS.org. The resources are also intended for patients and visitors who want to stop smoking.

Is it true that patients and visitors will be prohibited from smoking?

The smoke-free grounds policy applies to everyone on any property owned or leased by OMHS: employees, physicians, contractors, vendors, patients, visitors, volunteers—anyone.

May patients leave the hospital grounds to smoke?

For safety and liability reasons, patients may not leave the hospital grounds until discharge. Caregivers are directed to provide smoking cessation education and follow the nicotine replacement protocol (for details, refer to the Smoke-Free Environment Policy).



Live Well.
Work Well.

Treat yourself well.

What will be gained by moving to smoke-free grounds?

Exposure to secondhand smoke, even for a short time, is dangerous for several reasons:

- Smoke is a known carcinogen (causing cancer).
- As little as 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke can have an adverse effect, even on the coronary arteries of a healthy, young non-smoker.
- Secondhand smoke increases risk for acute and chronic respiratory disease and can cause or worsen asthma, ear infections and upper respiratory infections—a primary cause of absence from the workplace.

Are e-cigarettes permissible?

No. While e-cigarettes may serve as an aid to help people become non-smokers, they still have the appearance of smoking and are not consistent with the expectations of a smoke-free environment.

Examples of tactfully approaching smokers

In talking with anyone smoking on OMHS properties

We have moved to smoke-free grounds to help improve the health of the community. Would you please extinguish your cigarette?

The smoker may reply something to this effect: You have no right to tell me where I can and can't smoke.

Response: I'm sorry you feel this way, but we have established smoke-free grounds to protect our patients and visitors from the dangers of cigarette smoke. We appreciate your cooperation.

In talking with patients

On January 1, OMHS became a smoke-free facility. It will not be possible for you to smoke inside or outside the building while you are a patient. Smoking would negatively affect your treatment and be harmful to others. If you feel it will be difficult for you not to smoke while you are here, please talk with your nurse. He or she can talk with your doctor about helping to make you more comfortable while you are here.

If the patient responds he/she intends to smoke:

Please discuss your decision to smoke with your physician. Smoking could adversely affect your treatment. Smoking will make it difficult for you to receive the maximum benefits from your treatment while in the hospital. As an example, patients who smoke have twice the risk of wound infection as those of non-smokers.

In talking to family members:

On January 1, OMHS became a smoke-free facility. It will not be possible for you to smoke inside or outside the building while you are at the hospital. Secondhand smoke poses a danger for patients and would keep them from receiving the maximum benefits from their care. As an example, patients who smoke have twice the risk of wound infection as those of non-smokers.

Find more answers to your questions by reviewing the following policies and resources at www.MyOMHS.org.

Smoke-Free Environment Policy

A commitment to provide a safe environment and healthy workplace for staff, patients, families and visitors.

Professional Appearance Policy

Recognizes the importance of professional appearance of employees in maintaining an atmosphere that respects a diverse community, ensures a safe work environment and is conducive to the delivery of quality healthcare services.

Rest Periods/Meal Breaks Policy

An explanation of the organization's support for employees to rest and observe a meal break during their shifts in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Dismissal of Patient Without Physician Order

Guidelines for staff to follow when a patient requests to leave—or who leaves the hospital against medical advice—releasing physicians, hospital staff and the hospital from all responsibility.

Campus Boundaries

Maps of the Parrish Campus, HealthPark and Business Center, showing the perimeters of each location and non-smoking boundaries.

Resources to Become a Non-Smoker

Nicotine is extremely addictive. If you or a family member has tried to quit smoking alone you know how difficult it can be. But like many challenges we all tackle throughout life, the chance of success becomes more likely with help. We encourage you to talk with an expert or someone who has stopped smoking. Make an appointment with your family doctor, visit a support group or check out additional resources available at www.MyOMHS.org.

Log on to www.MyOMHS.org to watch the video about the new smoke-free environment and for resources on becoming a non-smoker.

