

M E M O R A N D U M



Date: December 5, 2008

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Erik Fabian, Tracey Lew and Elise Anderson

SUBJECT: To establish and implement a non-smoking policy for the Real Estate Operations property portfolio

*“There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and even small amounts of secondhand smoke exposure can be harmful to people’s health.”*  
2006 Surgeon General’s report “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke”

The demand for non-smoking subsidized and conventional apartment communities in Oregon and across the country is unquestionably clear. Many states, counties, cities, private property management companies, and over one hundred housing authorities, including at least six in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, have already successfully implemented non-smoking policies to the benefit of their employees and residents. On September 1, 2007, Guardian Management successfully transitioned 8,000 units to non-smoking. On January 1, 2009, the Oregon Clean Indoor Air Act will take effect banning smoking in all enclosed places of employment.

HAP’s FY09 MTW Annual Plan states, “Consider a smoke-free housing policy for a portion of public housing and affordable housing units.” HAP should take a proactive approach to this significant health issue by initiating a non-smoking policy across the entire REO property portfolio for the benefit of its residents and employees. Since HAP’s current PH lease allows residents to smoke within their units, this involuntarily exposes not only non-smoking residents but also over 80 HAP staff members to second hand smoke. HAP’s currently policy prohibits smoking in all workplace environments except in residential apartment communities. Therefore a non-smoking policy would additionally create equal access to a non-smoking environment for all employees.

**Healthy Air Survey and Results**

Earlier this year, HAP sanctioned a survey by the American Lung Association (ALA) of Oregon and the Multnomah County Health Department to determine public and affordable housing residents’ current practices and attitudes towards non-smoking. Surveys were mailed to all public housing properties and five affordable housing properties.

Overall, 945 public housing households responded to the survey (45% response rate) and 148 affordable households replied (32.7% response rate). Although the response rate from the AH properties was significantly smaller, their responses follow similarly with the PH responses. From the survey we learned that most PH (64%) and AH (60%) residents do not smoke and that they would support a non-smoking policy- 61% of all PH residents and 64% of AH residents said they would support a policy that prohibited smoking within living units and indoor spaces. For a detailed summary of the survey results, please see the attached [Report on Healthy Air Survey](#).

**HUD Requirements and Legalities**

HUD has declared that there is no “right” to smoke under fair housing or any other policies, nor is it a disability covered under ADA. As an MTW agency we do not need prior HUD approval to make changes to our lease and community rules, and will only need to provide a 60 day public commentary period prior to the change.

**Implementation Plan**

We would like to establish the non-smoking policy as of August 1, 2009. The non-smoking policy would apply to the whole REO portfolio- for all PH residents the non-smoking policy will go into effect as of 8/1/2009, for AH residents the policy will have a rolling implementation due to their differing lease requirements.

Residents will be required to sign a lease addendum that specifies smoking will be prohibited inside all living units, indoor common area, and within 10 feet from any entrances/exits and windows; the non-smoking policy is not a campus wide ban on smoking and only focuses on indoor smoking practices. Also prior to the policy change all REO properties will be evaluated to determine where potential “designated smoking areas” may be established to be compatible with the lease addendum. Smoking in prohibited areas will be a lease violation as of 8/1/2009 and will be enforced with a variety of corrective actions, of which will including smoking cessation education and outreach.

**Cessation Education**

To assist all residents with the non-smoking policy transition and to accommodate resident interest in smoking cessation, REO is committed to providing cessation education and outreach. Cessation education and outreach will be provided to all residents through a partnership with the ALA and RSCs by the way of resident meetings and property newsletters. Cessation education and outreach will begin prior to the implementation of the non-smoking policy and will be provided on a continual basis to residents through site staff and RSCs.



## **REPORT ON THE HEALTHY AIR SURVEY: Study on Residents' Current Practices and Attitudes toward Smoke-free Housing**

**American Lung Association of Oregon and Housing Authority of Portland  
May 2008**

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### **Smoking Behavior and Practices**

- The smoking prevalence of residents of the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) is 36%
- Elderly and disabled residents have a smoking rate of 39% and family respondents a rate of 32%.
- A significant majority -- 66% of all residents and 80% of families -- already have rules about smoking in their units. More than 500 respondents indicated that these rules were established for health reasons.

### **Support for Smoking Prohibitions**

- 61% of residents support a policy that would prohibit smoking inside HAP units.
- Both of the groups surveyed, elderly and disabled residents and families, (generally) support HAP prohibiting smoking inside agency units, with families being far more supportive.
- Support for an indoor no-smoking policy among elderly and disabled residents is 54%, while among families it is 72%.
- 52% support a ban on smoking "inside buildings and outside properties."
- Almost half of residents surveyed said they had experienced the drift of second hand smoke into their units, and of those 81% said that they were bothered by this.

### **Getting Help: With Second Hand Smoke**

- A small percentage, 16%, of those residents experiencing problems with second hand smoke expressed concerns about this to management.
- 92 residents said nothing happened afterwards and of those who did not express concerns, 114 felt that letting management know about the issue would "do no good."
- Another large group of respondents said they didn't let management know about their second hand smoke concern because they "didn't want to cause problems."

## Getting Help: Support for Quitting

- About 47% of those who said they smoke every day—among both elderly and disabled and families—responded 'yes' to the idea of receiving help with quitting smoking.
- Among household smokers, 45% of respondents said that they want help for a household member who smokes.

## Responses to the Survey

- All Housing Authority of Portland owned and managed buildings participated in the survey

## Response Totals and Rates

		<b>ED*</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>Total Response</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>37.8%</b>

\*ED = Elderly and disabled residents

## Recommendations

### Support Cessation for Residents Who Want to Quit

One way to build support for smoke free housing is to create demand by supporting those smokers who want to quit. As one respondent put it "I smoke, but if smoking was banned I could quit easier."

### Take a Comprehensive Approach

Integrate explanations of the health and economic benefits of quitting and smoke free living into existing health and wellness programs.

### Try a Pilot Program

Start by making two buildings smoke free to work out possible challenges and learn what approach would be most effective

### Establish long term goal to become entirely smoke free

Set a date in the future when all buildings will become smoke free and begin planning and preparing for that policy change now.