

# Tobacco Free Grounds Campaign Talking Points

## *Significance*

- Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of premature death and disability in the United States and St. Mary's County.
- Smoking causes heart disease, stroke, cancer, lung diseases, and diabetes.
- The leading causes of death in St Mary's County include heart disease, cancer, stroke, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and diabetes.
- Lung cancers account for the highest percentage (28%) of cancer deaths in St Mary's County.
- The percentage of current smokers (both adult and youth) in St. Mary's County is higher than the State of Maryland average.
- Youth that smoke are statistically more likely to drink alcohol (3x), use marijuana (5x), abuse prescription drugs (9x) and use other illegal drugs (6x).

## *Cost to Employers*

- Businesses pay an average of **\$2,189** in workers' compensation costs for smokers, compared with \$176 for nonsmokers.
- Smoking costs employers an estimated **\$3,383 per smoker** per year, \$1,623 in direct medical expenditures and \$1,768 in lost productivity.
- Smokers miss **60% more** days of work per year due to illness than nonsmokers.
- The average smoker spends **8%** of working hours on smoking breaks.

## *Evidence-Based Response: Policy for Tobacco Free Environment*

- Reduce exposure to secondhand smoke & prevalence of tobacco use
- Increase the number of tobacco users who quit
- Reduce the initiation of tobacco use among young people
- Reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality, including acute cardiovascular events
- Reduce healthcare costs substantially
- Evidence shows smoke-free policies do not have an adverse economic impact on businesses, including bars and restaurants

## *Legality*

- Employees do not have a legal "right" to smoke if their employers have a tobacco-free policy. Smokers cannot sue for discrimination under the ADA.

- People exposed to secondhand smoke on business premises can sue businesses. Adopting a broader policy can prevent this.

### *Cost to Implement Smoke Free Grounds*

- Establishing a Tobacco-free grounds policy: **Free**
- Tobacco cessation is more cost-effective than most other covered disease prevention interventions.
- It only costs 10 to 40 cents per employee per month to provide a comprehensive tobacco cessation program if desired. The St. Mary's County Health Department offers free Tobacco Cessation classes and support.
- Studies show that offering a tobacco cessation benefit is cost neutral by year three and cost-saving by year five.
- Adopting a tobacco-free grounds policy may also reduce: health insurance premiums, fire insurance by 25% to 30%, and cleaning and maintenance costs (in a survey of 2000 companies adopting smoke-free policies 60% reported reductions).

### *Local Government Authority & Regulation*

- A local government may adopt and enforce ordinances, board of health rules and policies restricting or prohibiting tobacco use that apply to:
  - Local government buildings
  - Local government grounds
  - Local government vehicles
  - Enclosed public spaces