



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADOPTS SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS POLICY AND OFFERS SUPPORT FOR SMOKERS AS CLEAN INDOOR AIR ACT GOES INTO EFFECT

LEONARDTOWN, MD (January 29, 2008) – St. Mary's County Health Department is going smoke free both inside and outside the Marek Building, which is home to the health department in Leonardtown. The new policy, effective February 1, corresponds to the implementation of the Maryland 2007 Clean Indoor Air Act signed into law by Governor Martin O'Malley in May of last year. The health department will continue its standing policy prohibiting smoking in indoor areas open to its employees and the public, and will expand this policy by prohibiting smoking anywhere on the health department campus including the sidewalks and parking lot.

As this policy goes into effect, the health department is continuing to focus on education and support for both employees and visitors, according to health department officials. Already some employees have quit smoking in advance of the policy and several more are attending smoking cessation classes offered by their colleagues in the Wellness and Health Promotion Program. Signs have been posted throughout the health department so that visitors will know what is expected of them.

"Quitting smoking is difficult and the health department wants to set the strongest example to the community for making the transition to non-smoking environments," according to Karen Russell, Wellness and Health Promotion manager. As people adapt to regulations in our public areas around the county,

(more)

Smoke free inside and out, p. 2

the health department will continue to offer smoking cessation classes to people who want to quit smoking. A special class for teens under the age of 18 is being held at the Do Dah Deli in Leonardtown, Saturday, February 16 and 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. Additional six week programs for adults are scheduled to begin Wednesday, March 19, Saturday, April 5, and Tuesday, May 13. All adult programs consist of six one hour classes held weekly. All of the classes are free, and the locations of the adult classes will be announced.

For more information or to register for an upcoming smoking cessation program, please call the health department at 301-475-4356.

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