

REDUCING SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE IN JOSEPHINE COUNTY: SMOKEFREE TRANSIT

SUMMARY

After identifying secondhand smoke exposure as an issue for both Josephine County Transit (JCT) passengers and employees, it was necessary to provide a safe environment by reducing secondhand smoke exposure and increasing accessibility for everyone. JCT and Josephine County Public Health made a collaborated effort to make a sustainable difference in JCT passenger and employee health and the well-being of their community. Today, all JCT passengers and employees can enjoy smokefree transit shelters and stops thanks to a policy that protects their health.



CHALLENGE

Throughout 2013 the JCT Program Supervisor, Scott Chancey, began to observe an increase in the number of passengers smoking while inside transit shelters. Non-smoking passengers would remove themselves from the protection of the shelter in an effort to avoid secondhand smoke exposure, even if it meant braving the elements. If an individual is smoking under a shelter, those around have a limited opportunity to avoid secondhand smoke exposure. Such events created a sense of urgency to promote smokefree transit areas. Josephine County Commissioners posed their questions regarding the proposed policy. Would the policy include all transit shelters and stops? How would this policy be enforced? Commissioners were also under the impression that county owned transit shelters were already covered under the Indoor Clean Air Act Law.



Together we can make Josephine County a healthier place for residents and visitors. Providing smokefree environments in community areas is part of a comprehensive approach to preventing tobacco use.

Policies that safeguard our community areas from cigarette and smokeless tobacco litter are essential to good health. In addition, you can join us in promoting environments that promote health and prevent disease. Keeping tobacco prevention & education efforts strong will save lives and money.



SOLUTION

The proposed policy was presented to County Commissioners at an Administration Workshop. The policy draft was reviewed and forwarded to the Weekly Business Session for Administrative Actions where previous Commissioner's questions were addressed. Legal Counsel reported that the Indoor Clean Air Act Law did not cover shelters as previously suspected. In addition, Commissioners were reassured that enforcement would rely on the compliance of passengers and the support of transit staff. Policy language was written to include all transit shelters and stops to protect a greater number of passengers and community members. JCT and the Tobacco Prevention Program worked together to decrease secondhand smoke exposure in Josephine County. This public health policy that was adopted by our County Commissioners supports the value of tobacco free policies in our community. The Tobacco Prevention & Education Program appreciates the support that was given for this policy.

RESULT

Public Health and JCT were successful in reaching their ultimate goal of reducing secondhand smoke exposure. The Josephine County Board of Commissioners approved the Josephine Community Transit Policy in October 2013 and all shelters and stops became smokefree. Public Health's Tobacco Prevention & Education Program provided decals that clearly define the areas where smoking is prohibited. Individuals are politely asked to refrain from smoking on or within 10 feet of all shelters and stops. The policy applies to all passengers and employees and includes all open, semi-open and enclosed transit shelter sites and stops in Josephine County. Smokefree policies can help smokers quit or reduce smoking and this policy created greater public awareness around the hazards of secondhand smoke exposure.

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