

Dear.....

Diana T. Myers and Associates, Inc. (DMA) is serving as consultant to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Tobacco Control Project (SEPA TCP). Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) and operated by Health Promotion Council (HPC), a subsidiary of Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), our mandate is to assist multi-unit housing buildings in Southeastern PA (including Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery and Schuylkill counties) to become tobacco free.

As you may be aware, by July 31, 2018, HUD is requiring that all public housing developments go smoke free. This means adopting a policy prohibiting the use of "prohibited tobacco products" in all indoor areas, including individual living units, common areas, administrative office buildings and outdoor areas within 25 feet of those areas. In addition, PHFA recently included a threshold requirement in its 2018 QAP that all new Low Income Housing Tax Projects be smoke free.

The benefits of smoke free housing are indisputable-- not only for residents, but also for visitors, building owners, developers, managers, employees and contractors. Second hand smoke is extremely dangerous (up to 60% of air in apartment units come from other units in the building) and the Surgeon General reports that there is no risk-free, safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. The costs of cleaning, maintenance, property/item replacement, and insurance in smoking units are much higher than in non-smoking units and fire caused by smoking is the leading cause of death in residential units. Furthermore, studies indicate that an increasing majority of both residents and applicants of multi-unit housing prefer to live smoke free.

Due to these compelling reasons, we are strongly encouraging owners and managers to ensure that all multi-family properties go smoke free. Technical assistance is available that will enhance the environment in your buildings for staff, residents and visitors.

Assistance includes:

- Developing a smoke free policy, including sharing best practices related to smoke-free policies from Pennsylvania and elsewhere;
- Assisting in developing a communication plan to share the requirements of the policy with tenants and to craft a message in a positive way to minimize push back from tenants;
- Assembling a team of service providers who are available to provide smoking cessation classes and to assist on-site staff in working with tenants. Services include:
 - Tobacco, nicotine, and vaping education for staff and residents;
 - Dangers of smoking in multi-unit housing (e.g. 2nd and 3rd-hand smoke, fire hazard, etc.);
 - Information sessions about quitting smoking resources;

- Onsite, no cost quit smoking programs provided by local health professionals (4-8 sessions, including nicotine replacement); and
- Connection to 1-800-QuitNow for additional nicotine patches and support.
- Assisting in development of an implementation plan to address lease enforcement and possible reasonable accommodation issues.

Thank you for considering this critical wellness and economic issue. .

Sincerely,

Diana Myers

Diana T. Myers and Associates, Inc.