

Sample Presentation Outline: Importance of Tobacco-Free School Environments

I. Introduction: Smokefree and Tobacco-Free School Environments

Why important?

- Individual health of smokers/potential smokers
- Secondhand smoke as a source of short- and long-term health effects
- Secondhand smoke as an asthma trigger for students, faculty, and staff

II. Tobacco use among students

- Tobacco use usually begins in early adolescence.
- Cigarette smoking during childhood and adolescence produces significant health problems among young people. [For longer presentation: add information about health problems]
- Preventing young people from starting to use tobacco is critical to reducing the death and disease caused by tobacco use. [For longer presentation: add information about number of current smokers under 18; numbers of tobacco deaths, etc.]

III. Tobacco, indoor air quality and asthma

- Secondhand smoke is a major indoor air pollutant, containing about 4,000 chemicals, including 200 known poisons, such as formaldehyde and carbon monoxide, as well as 43 carcinogens.
- Secondhand smoke is a major asthma trigger for students, faculty, and staff; secondhand smoke worsens the asthma of an estimated 200,000 to 1 million children.
- Asthma stats/overview:
 - leading serious chronic illness among children
 - current attack prevalence is 4 million American children under 18¹
 - accounts for 14 million lost school days; is the leading causes of school absenteeism due to a chronic condition; third leading cause of hospitalization among children under 15
 - asthma breathing problems happen in episodes—can be anywhere from mild to life-threatening, requiring emergency medical treatment
 - each person with asthma has specific triggers; for many, it's cigarette smoke
- Creating asthma-friendly schools must include comprehensive smokefree policies.

IV. Tobacco as a workplace issue for faculty and staff

- Smokefree workplaces provide clean indoor air and protect employees from life-threatening effects of secondhand smoke.
- Health effects can have a major impact on employees' morale, productivity and sense of well-being.
- A smoking employee costs the employer at least \$1,000 per year in total excess direct and indirect healthcare costs.
- Workers have been awarded unemployment, disability and worker's compensation benefits for illness and loss of work due to exposure to secondhand smoke.

–continued–

¹ National Center for Health Statistics. Raw Data from the *National Health Interview Survey*, US, 1997-2000. (Analysis by the American Lung Association Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Using SPSS and SUDAAN software).

V. Tobacco use prevention [note: for short presentation, this section can be deleted.]

American Lung Association recommends that community/state policies to prevent tobacco use among young people should include:

- Tobacco education in the schools
- Restrictions on tobacco advertising and promotions on and near school grounds
- Complete ban on smoking by anyone on school grounds
- No sale of tobacco products to minors
- Tax increases on tobacco products so young people cannot afford them

VI. Elements of school-based smokefree policies [Note: for short presentation, this section can be shortened or deleted.]

- Educating students about how to resist social influences to smoke; incorporate specific tobacco use prevention programs
- Sustaining comprehensive school health education and community-wide programs that involve parents, media, community organizations and other elements of the adolescent's social environment
- Using teen-focused smoking cessation programs that involve appropriate facilitators who work well with teens in a non-judgmental way

Note: The net effects of smoking restrictions should reduce the psychosocial benefits of smoking to adolescents, making it less likely that those who experiment with smoking will continue to smoke and become dependent.

VII. Characteristics of model smokefree school policies:

- Smoking on school grounds, in school buildings, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events is prohibited for students, school personnel, and visitors.
- Schools enforce the smokefree policy and consistently administer penalties for violations.
- Disciplinary measures for non-compliance with policy are educational as well as punitive.
- Policy development includes active collaboration with teachers, students, and parent groups to give direction and build support for tobacco-free schools.
- All components of a school's smoking policy, including consequences for violations, are communicated in written and oral form to students, staff, and visitors.
- District-wide educational programs addressing the prevention of tobacco use are initiated or expanded as part of the policy implementation process.
- Smoking cessation programs or other incentives are developed for students, school personnel, and if possible, the public.
- Programs are periodically evaluated to provide information on acceptance and effectiveness of policy.
- Schools do not accept any contributions from the tobacco industry, including direct financial support and materials paid for or produced by or for the tobacco industry.