

To: Board of Advisors for Brookline Housing Authority

From: Brookline Department of Public Health, Tobacco Control Program

Date: August 7, 2012

Re: Smoke Free Housing Initiative

I. Goal:

To introduce building-wide, no smoking rules to multi-unit housing properties owned and managed by Brookline Housing Authority. It is important to note that a no-smoking policy means "No smoking." It does not mean "No Smokers." Smokers would need to smoke outside away from the building.

II. Benefits:

- Implementation of a smoke-free policy is associated with positive changes in cessation-related behaviors and reduced SHS exposure.¹
- Smoke-free policy will give smoking residents incentive to consider quitting smoking.²
- Rates of indoor smoking will decrease.³
- Rates of non-smokers' exposure to indoor SHS will decrease.⁴
- Possible discount on master plan insurance.
- Fewer tenant disputes between tenants.

III. Cost Benefits

- Smoking can leave residue and stains on wall, curtains, cabinets, blinds, appliances, and fixtures; odors in carpets, curtains, and walls; burn damage to tiles, carpets, curtains, countertops, and bathtubs.⁵
- Apartment turnover costs can be two to seven times greater when smoking is allowed (\$3,515 versus \$560 on average).⁶
- The current options for minimizing resident SHS exposure are costly and ineffective. These options include sealing leakage paths between units to reduce the transfer of SHS from smokers' units to non-smokers' units⁷ and installing or upgrade ventilation systems to help dilute SHS smoke transfer between units⁸. Since such mechanical changes

¹ Pizacani et al. (2012).

² Pizacani et al. (2012).

³ Pizacani et al. (2012).

⁴ Pizacani et al. (2012).

⁵ Banthin, C., & McCabe, K. (2012). *An Introduction to Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing*. (Unpublished presentation). Public Health Advocacy Institute, Boston, MA.

⁶ Banthin, C., & McCabe, K. (2012).

⁷ Bohac, et al. (2011)

⁸ Bohac, et al. (2011)

typically do not stop infiltration of smoke, involuntary exposure to SHS can be reduced but not eliminated by modifying existing, occupied multi-unit buildings.⁹

Furthermore, there is no safe-level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Accordingly, the American Society of Heating and Ventilation Engineers does not recommend ventilation to eliminate the harmed caused by secondhand smoke exposure

IV. Concerns/Unresolved Issues

- Some residents who have smoked for their entire lives may oppose the policy.
- Smoke is not a disability, for which a reasonable accommodation must be made. However, mobility-limited smokers may ask to smoke in their units. Their mobility issue should be resolved in the same manner as a nonsmoker with the same mobility issue. They should not be allowed to smoke in there unit.
- Most residents in subsidized housing in Massachusetts support no-smoking rules, but noncompliance sometimes occurs among a small percentage of residents for a period immediately after implementation. Additional education, warning letters and in-person meetings with property staff is an appropriate response.

V. Trends

- There is strong support among residents and property owners for smoke-free housing policies.¹⁰
- Housing authorities across the Commonwealth that have adopted or are considering smoke-free housing policies: Boston, Arlington, Newton, Wayland, Worcester, Springfield, Lee, Stockbridge, Northampton, Greenfield, Leominster, Cape Cod (Falmouth, Brewster, Barnstable, Chatham).¹¹

VI. Background:

- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development published a notice on July 31, 2009, strongly encouraging implementation of smoke-free policies in public housing to prevent second hand smoke (SHS) migration between units and subsequent exposure to nonsmokers.
- In multi-unit housing, nonsmoking tenants with home smoking bans can still be at risk for exposure to SHS if they are living in buildings without bans due to infiltration of SHS from other units or from outdoor areas.¹²
- Lower income persons living in public housing may be more vulnerable to the negative effects of SHS because they are more likely to be elderly, disabled, or have young children in the home.¹³

⁹ Bohac, D.L., Hewett, M.J., Hammond, S.K., & Grimsrud, D.T. (2011). Secondhand smoke transfer and reductions by air sealing and ventilation in multiunit buildings: PFT and nicotine verification. *Indoor Air*, 21(1), 36-44.

¹⁰ Banthin, C., & McCabe, K. (2012).

¹¹ Banthin, C., & McCabe, K. (2012).

¹² King, B.A., Travers, M.J., Cummings, K.M., Mahoney, M.C., & Hyland, A.J. (2010b). Secondhand Smoke Transfer in Multiunit Housing. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 12(11), 1133-1141.

- Research consistently shows that a majority of residents in multi-unit housing would favor the implementation of policy to ban smoking in all areas, including personal living spaces.¹⁴
- Smoking is the number one cause of home fire deaths in the United States.¹⁵
- Despite dramatic declines in tobacco use among American adults since the 1960s, people of lower socioeconomic status continue to have higher smoking prevalence and greater exposure to SHS than the overall population.^{16, 17}
- According to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of SHS exposure for children and adults.¹⁸
- SHS has been designated as a known human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.¹⁹
- Personal living areas are a significant source of SHS exposure for many individuals.²⁰

¹³ Pizacani, B.A., Maher, J.E., Rohde, K., Drach, L., & Stark, M.J. (2012). Implementation of a Smoke-free Policy in Subsidized Multiunit Housing: Effects on Smoking Cessation and Secondhand Smoke Exposure. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, ??(??), 1-8.

¹⁴ King et al., (2010a).

¹⁵ U.S. Fire Administration. (2012). Smoking-Related Fires in Residential Buildings (2008-2010). *Topical Fire Report Series*, 13(6), 1-13.

¹⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Current Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years --- United States, 2005 -2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 60(35), 1207-1212. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm?s_cid=%20mm6035a5.htm_w

¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Nonsmokers' Exposure to Secondhand Smoke --- United States, 1999-2008. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 59(35), 1141-1146. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5935a4.htm?s_cid=mm5935a4_w

¹⁸ US Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: a Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA.

¹⁹ US Department of Health and Human Services. (2006).

²⁰ King, B.A., Cummings, K.M., Mahoney, M.C., Juster, H.R., & Hyland, A.J. (2010a). Multiunit housing residents' experiences and attitudes toward smoke-free policies. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 12(6), 598-605.