

March 8, 2011



Carroll County Health Department to go tobacco free

Posted: Tuesday, March 8, 2011 12:00 am | Updated: 11:41 pm, Mon Mar 7, 2011.

By Alisha George, Times Staff Writer |

The Carroll County Health Department is busy preparing to become a tobacco-free campus April 20.

Director of Health Education Kim Spangler said the policy will ban smoke and smokeless tobacco use on h including in personal vehicles.

"It was very much past due that the Health Department go tobacco-free," she said.

Spangler is chairwoman of the committee that was charged with discussing the creation of a tobacco-free ca people, both smokers and non-smokers, reviewed policies of other businesses and organizations that have g

Some of those agencies gave presentations to the group about the pros and cons of having a tobacco-free ca come with the change before a specific policy was crafted for the health department.

People of all ages and health conditions visit the health department, so this policy will promote and protect workers, Spangler said.

Jamie Stewart, office clerk for the bureau of addictions at the Carroll County Health Department, is a smok tobacco-free committee.

Though she has smoked for about 10 years, she understands the reasons behind the policy change.

"[Allowing tobacco] sends mixed signals to clients," she said.

Stewart is planning on using a nicotine patch and other health department resources in an attempt to quit smoking.

Though she doesn't have to quit, she wanted to take this opportunity to try, she said. Other smokers have expressed concern they would be able to smoke, but understand the new policy reinforces the overall message of the agency.

"Hopefully people start realizing that it's not good to smoke and also think about quitting," Stewart said. "Not everyone is like the people around them."

Spangler said workers can go off-campus and smoke during lunchtime and other breaks, but will not be permitted to smoke on department premises.

The policy is based on research about the harmful ingredients in tobacco and the negative health concerns associated with second-hand smoke, she said.

With the implementation of this new policy, she said the department is looking forward to setting a good example for the community.

This effort is part of a goal of The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County that wants at least two agencies to be tobacco-free this year, Spangler said.

"[The Partnership] chose the Carroll County Health Department because we think they could influence the community," said Dorothy Fox, a spokeswoman for The Partnership.

She said the two agencies must have upper-level management support and desire to implement the policy. She said negotiations with the second agency that they hope will go tobacco-free this year.

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