



# Healthy HotSpot

*Connect to places for healthy living.*

## HEALTHY HOTSPOT SUCCESS STORY

### Housing Authority of Cook County Goes Smoke-Free

#### Summary

The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) is the largest public housing authority in Illinois to transition all its public housing sites to 100-percent smoke-free, beginning Dec. 1, 2015. HACC is implementing smoke-free housing protections at all 23 of its family, senior and high-rise properties – totaling 1,800 public housing units and 200 multi-family units – in advance of anticipated deadlines proposed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

*“This is an example of how the places we live can support us in being healthy,” said CCDPH Chief Operating Officer Dr. Terry Mason, MD, FACS. “We are excited to have HACC as a Healthy HotSpot partner, taking the lead to promote smoke-free living in public housing.”*

#### Challenge

Tobacco smoke can move from one unit to another in multi-unit buildings. Between 35 and 65 percent of air in any given unit is shared with air from common areas and other residential spaces. According to a 2014 HACC survey, more than 25 percent of residents polled were current smokers and 57 percent supported a smoke-free policy where they live. Almost a quarter of residents were opposed to the policy; especially in buildings where the proportion of smokers approached or exceeded half the residents.

#### Solution

*HACC and the CCDPH partnered to provide information on the benefits of smoke-free living and the dangers of second- and third-hand smoke. CCDPH conducted 18 forums reaching more than 250 residents, and educated HACC staff and board members. CCDPH also linked HACC with community providers to connect residents to cessation support. Continuing resident engagement is critical to successful policy implementation and to soften resident oppositions. To gain their support, residents must have an active and authentic say in the planning and eventual roll-out of smoke-free protections in their buildings.*



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Healthy HotSpot is an initiative led by the Cook County Department of Public Health that aims to build healthy places in suburban Cook County through community partnerships. For more information, visit [healthychotspot.org](http://healthychotspot.org).

Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



*“HACC is proud to be a leader in implementing a smoke-free policy throughout all of its family, senior, and high-rise public housing sites. We are protecting the health of our families and underscore the importance of the collaboration with CCDPH – true partners who have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with our staff and communities to educate, train and execute this life-saving program.”*

Richard Monocchio, HACC Executive Director

## Results

More than 3,500 residents and their guests will now breathe easier as a result of the smoke-free policy. To increase the visibility of this change, the agencies worked together to create messaging and signage in the many languages of HACC residents to welcome them to smoke-free homes. Healthy HotSpot provided over 3,200 materials, including signs, door hangers, refrigerator magnets and window clings about the benefits of smoke-free housing, as well as tips and resources for quitting smoking. CCDPH also trained HACC building managers on referral to the Illinois Tobacco Quitline, a free service that provides cessation counseling. Expected health benefits include nearly 1,800 people not being exposed to secondhand smoke and more than 550 quitting smoking.

## Sustainable Success

The partnership between HACC and CCDPH resulted in real progress toward smoke-free protections for residents in multi-unit developments. To continue this success, HACC plans to become an official “referral partner” of the Illinois Tobacco Quitline, which will simplify the process for connecting residents to cessation services and enable HACC to track referrals. HACC continues to engage residents and their families to build support for the new policy.

## Learn more

- Watch the HACC success story video at <http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot/success-stories/hacc>.
- Discover the benefits of smoke-free living at <http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot/tobacco-free-living/smoke-free-housing>.
- Use the Healthy HotSpot map <http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot/map> to find places that support healthy living where you live, work, learn, worship, play and receive healthcare.