



## Press Release

**For immediate release:** Nov. 30, 2015  
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### **Public health officials applaud Housing Authority of Cook County for declaring all properties smoke-free Healthy HotSpots**

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials are applauding the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC), for being the largest public housing authority in Illinois to transition all its public housing sites to 100-percent smoke-free, beginning Dec. 1, 2015.

“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.”

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).

“We are protecting the health of our families and underscore the importance of the collaboration with Healthy HotSpot, an initiative led by CCDPH, that aims to build healthy places in suburban Cook County through community partnerships,” said HACC Executive Director Richard Monocchio. “They have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with our staff and communities to educate, train and execute this life-saving program.”

More than 3,500 residents and their guests will now breathe easier as a result of the smoke-free policy. 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 are current smokers and 57 percent support a smoke-free policy where they live. Only 100 percent smoke-free environments protect from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Smoke-free housing reduces risk of heart attacks, heart and lung disease, cancer and respiratory illness due to exposure to secondhand smoke.

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. HACC continues to engage residents and their families to build support for the new policy.

Watch their success story 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.

*Healthy HotSpot is funded in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

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