



## Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 31, 2015

# Renters and condo owners given a voice in battle against secondhand smoke in their homes

*Survey designed to determine local support for smoke-free amenity*

SARASOTA COUNTY — Tobacco Prevention Partnerships in five Southwest Florida Counties are teaming up to find out what local renters think about smoke-free living options. Starting today, multiunit housing residents in Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee Counties can take a brief [online survey](#) to share their opinions on smoke-free living.

Demand for smoke-free housing is increasing nationwide. However, smoke-free living options remain scarce in Southwest Florida for people who want or need to live in a smoke-free environment. For that reason, five Tobacco Prevention Partnerships in Southwest Florida have decided to give local multiunit housing residents the opportunity to have their voices heard. Survey results will be shared with local property managers and owners to assist them in determining whether the smoke-free amenity is an option for their community.



**Photo: Tobacco smoke can leave a thin residue of chemicals known as third hand smoke.**

More than 82 percent of Floridians are non-smokers and people who do identify themselves as smokers often do not permit smoking in their home. Secondhand smoke doesn't just smell terrible; it can cause serious health problems such as lung cancer, heart disease and stroke; even in non-smokers. In fact, an estimated 33,000 Americans die each year from heart disease alone primarily due to secondhand smoke exposure. Exposure to secondhand smoke is especially an issue in multiunit housing communities where smoking is allowed, as tobacco smoke can move along air ducts, through cracks in the walls and floors, through elevator shafts, and along plumbing and electrical lines affecting units that are nearby.

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### **MEDIA NOTES:**

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“Our goal is for property managers to start thinking about smoke-free living as an amenity that they can offer to potential residents,” says Tobacco Program Manager, Jeanette Robinson. “Some managers may not know that this is something renters are looking for, and because it is a newer concept for our area, offering this amenity can really set them apart from the competition as an increasing number of renters seek out healthier living options.”

Current apartment residents, condo owners, or future residents to the Sarasota County area are encouraged to go online and let local property managers know whether or not they prefer to live in a smoke-free community or building. Residents can access the brief online survey today, at [www.bit.do/SWFLRenterSurvey](http://www.bit.do/SWFLRenterSurvey).

## **ABOUT TOBACCO PREVENTION IN SARASOTA COUNTY**

The Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County is comprised of agencies representing many different sectors of the community including hospitals, nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, medical clinics, educational institutions, and community leadership groups committed to establishing a Tobacco-Free Sarasota County. Through the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, Tobacco Prevention Program offers free resources, materials, and technical assistance to property managers who want to offer “Smoke-Free” as an amenity.

## **ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA**

Tobacco Free Florida is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida’s tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco Free Florida is managed by the Florida Department of Health, specifically the Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida.

## **SMOKING CESSATION**

Smokers and smokeless tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit. To learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state’s free cessation resources, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](http://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](http://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

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Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.  
View the complete policy at [www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx)

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