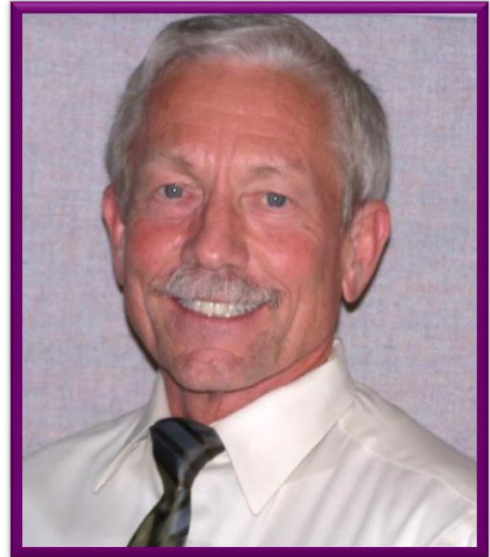


To *Your* HEALTH *Fresno County*

Bringing you public health issues and ways to improve personal, family, neighborhood and community health



The Cost of Tobacco – Part 1

December 2, 2014

In 1988, California voters approved the Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act also known as Proposition 99. This initiative placed a 25-cent tax on cigarettes and dedicates 5 cents of the tax to fund California's comprehensive tobacco control program. This program is widely acknowledged as one of the world's most successful public health efforts.¹ In California, the number of adult cigarette smokers has decreased by more than 50% over the last 2 decades. Deaths from smoking in California have also decreased by 20% since 1999. In Fresno County, smoking among adults has dropped from 17.9% to 14.3% from 1999 to 2009 and lung cancer deaths have decreased significantly since 1999.^{2,3}

Even if you don't smoke, every person pays for tobacco use.

While there have been many successes over the last 20 years in reducing the burden of tobacco, these products continue to affect health and take an economic toll in our communities. In California, smoking costs \$21 for every \$1 that is earned from the tobacco tax.² According to the University of California San Francisco, the total annual cost of smoking in California is \$18.1 billion. This dollar figure includes direct healthcare costs for individuals as well as costs from lost productivity due to illness and early death. In Fresno County, smoking costs \$421.2 million annually. Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death, disease, and disability in California and in the United States.⁴

About 1 in 5 deaths in the United States is the result of cigarette smoking.⁴

Smoking increases a person's risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke, and respiratory illnesses such as, asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.⁴ Smoking also impacts the health of others. Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 3,400 lung cancer deaths and 46,000 heart disease deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at a greater risk for ear infections, asthma attacks, respiratory symptoms (such as, coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath), and respiratory infections (such as, bronchitis, pneumonia).⁵

People who live in multi-unit housing are at a greater risk for secondhand smoke exposure.

Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure can occur in a variety of environments. These may include but are not limited to: the workplace; public places such as, restaurant patios, sidewalks, casinos; and vehicles. A major source of secondhand smoke exposure for millions of people in the United States occurs in multi-unit housing (MUH) complexes. MUH complexes are defined as apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and duplexes. These types of dwellings often share heat and air conditioning systems which allow non-smoking tenants to be exposed to drifting SHS from tenants who smoke. In MUH complexes, secondhand smoke can also seep through: light fixtures, ceiling crawl spaces, open windows and doors, and electrical sockets. ⁶ In Fresno County, a survey conducted with MUH tenants found that 58% had been exposed to drifting SHS in their unit.⁷

What is thirdhand smoke and why should we be concerned?

Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure are widely known to cause long term health problems. Recent information suggests that we should also pay close attention to thirdhand smoke (THS) exposure. Thirdhand smoke is residual nicotine and other chemicals left on a variety of indoor surfaces by tobacco smoke. This residue can react with common indoor pollutants to create a toxic mix of chemicals that are known to cause cancer.⁸ THS remains on surfaces such as furniture, clothing, hair, toys, skin, and even dust. Young children are most vulnerable since THS residue can be ingested from contaminated surfaces. The build-up of THS is a problem in MUH. When MUH tenants smoke cigarettes or cigars inside of a unit, over time the THS residue accumulates throughout the unit. Studies have shown that thirdhand smoke can linger in homes even after they have been cleaned and sometimes even after new carpeting has been installed and the unit has been painted.¹⁰

What is the Fresno County Department of Public Health doing to reduce the risks of SHS and THS in MUH?

The Tobacco Prevention Program (TPP) at the Fresno County Department of Public Health receives numerous complaints from MUH tenants regarding SHS and THS. TPP identified four apartment complexes and has worked with them to adopt and implement voluntary policies to prohibit smoking in 100% of those units. The Department is currently working with MUH landlords and managers to disclose the location of smoking and non-smoking units. This type of policy will allow new tenants to make an informed decision about where they choose to live.

What can you do to protect you and your family from secondhand and thirdhand smoke?

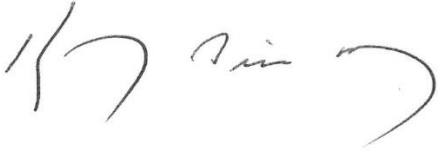
- If you smoke, wash your hands right away after smoking.
- Ask smokers not to smoke around you and your family.
- Post "Thank You for Not Smoking" signs in your home and car.
- Set-up a comfortable place outside of your home where smokers can smoke.
- Make sure your childcare workers and babysitters are non-smokers.
- If you live in a MUH complex, ask your neighbors to sign a petition to support smoke-free housing units and present it to your manager.
- Before moving into a new multi-unit housing complex, ask the manager about the smoking policy at the complex and where smoking is allowed and/or not allowed.

In my next letter, I will share with you information about how the retail environment impacts youth tobacco use. I also plan to discuss the rise in popularity of e-cigarettes and cigarillos and the potential risks associated with these new products.

If you smoke or use smoke-less tobacco and are interested in quitting, contact the Fresno County Department of Public Health Tobacco Prevention Program at (559) 600-6449 or visit www.fcdph.org It is never too late to quit.

I would like to hear from you on this, or any matter affecting the health of our community. Email me at ToYourHealth@co.fresno.ca.us.

Here's to your health!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Bird", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Ken Bird, Fresno County Health Officer

References

1. California Health and Human Services Agency. California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program. About the California Tobacco Control Program (Making a Difference). Retrieved from <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco/Documents/Making%20a%20Difference%2012012.pdf>
2. Max W, Sung H-Y, Shi Y, & Stark B. (2014) The Cost of Smoking in California, 2009. San Francisco, CA: Institute for Health & Aging, University of California, San Francisco.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER. (1999 and 2009) Fresno County Death and Population Data. Retrieved from <http://wonder.cdc.gov/>
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. (2014, February 6). Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. (2014, April 11). Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm#adults
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health, Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services, Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch. Healthy Homes Manual Smoke-Free Policies in Multiunit Housing. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/>
7. Krenz, V., and Jones, D., Gholamrezaei-Eha, L. (2011). A Report on Smoking in Multi-Unit Housing: Resident's Public Opinion Poll in Fresno County. California: Fresno County Tobacco Prevention Program.
8. Burton, Adrian. (2011, February) Does the Smoke Ever Clear? Thirdhand Smoke Exposure Raises New Concerns. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, volume 119, number 2, A 71.
9. Ramírez, N., Özela, M., Lewis, A., Marcéc, R., et al. (2014, October). Exposure to Nitrosamines in Thirdhand Tobacco Smoke Increases Cancer Risk in Non-Smokers. *Environment International*, Volume 71, 139-147.
10. Matt G.E. Quintana, P., Zakarian, J.M., et al. (2010, October 30). When smokers move out and non-smokers move in: residential thirdhand smoke pollution and exposure. *Tobacco Control*, doi:10.1136/tc.2010.037382.