



News Release

July 20, 2009

Central Health celebrates six months smoke free

Tomorrow July 21, 2009, Central Health celebrates six months of being smoke free at all facilities and offices throughout the region. Since January 21, 2009, patients, clients, residents, visitors and staff have not been permitted to smoke indoors or on any exterior grounds and parking lots.

"I am happy to report that we have had a lot of success with the implantation of our smoke free properties policy," said Gail Huang, Director of Employee Wellness, Health and Safety. "The policy is about helping people to make better decisions about their own personal health. Now that we have reached the six month milestone we will be stepping up our enforcement throughout the region."

This means that people seen smoking on Central Health properties can expect to be approached and asked to stop smoking. Also, clients can expect that they will be asked if they have used tobacco products within the last six month every time they register for a test, procedure, emergency room services, etc.

"Our focus is to identify smokers so that we can offer assistance because there are a variety of options available to help people quit smoking," said Valerie Pritchett, Director of Cardio-Pulmonary Services and Chairperson of Central Health's Clean Air Committee. "We have had 244 referrals to *the Smoker's Helpline* from Central Health in the past six months. This means people are taking the first step towards a healthier lifestyle and I would like to commend every person who is making efforts to quit smoking because we know it's not easy."

Central Health has been promoting the smoke free properties policy through posters, brochures, recorded messages, inserts in appointment letters and other means.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the managers, staff, clients and visitors of Central Health for helping implement and enforce this policy. We have had a lot of support and it is greatly appreciated," said Ms. Huang. "Implementation of the smoke free properties policy is a shared responsibility and we look forward to continued cooperation in the future. We know that smoke free environments are best for everyone."

People looking for more information on quitting smoking can call the *Smoker's Helpline* at 1-800-363-5864.

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