



**BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY**

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**For Immediate Release**

**BHA finalizes smoke-free housing notification**  
*Resident final notification regarding the upcoming implementation of smoke free housing in all Boston Housing Authority apartments sent out today*

BHA Administrator Bill McGonagle is pleased to announce that public housing in Boston is going smoke free; residents across the city will receive their final official notice that as of September 30, 2012 the BHA Non-Smoking Lease Addendum will become effective. This policy is expected to make Boston the largest city in the country with such a ban in place.

“The City of Boston is proud to be on the forefront of having smoke-free living in our public housing,” Mayor Menino said. “All our residents deserve a safe, healthy environment to live and raise their families in.”

Last January, resident households began signing lease addendums whereby the head of household agrees that each household member and guest or visitor shall refrain from smoking in their apartment, anywhere in their building and within a specified distance from the building. Residents who did not sign the lease addendum will still be required to comply with the non-smoking policy.

“We are excited to implement this policy for the well-being of all of our residents,” said McGonagle. “This creates a healthy environment for everyone, especially children, residents suffering from asthma, and our elderly who are afflicted with emphysema and cardiovascular disease.”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved the

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BHA's Non-Smoking Policy in August 2011. The policy has also been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The BHA receives transfer requests on a regular basis from current residents requesting housing free of second-hand smoke. These transfer requests document the hazards that second-hand smoke is causing for BHA residents, many of whom are elderly or children with asthma, cancer or other illnesses. When surveyed, approximately 90 percent of BHA residents across the city, including those who smoke, reported that they support a non-smoking housing environment.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no risk-free level of contact with secondhand smoke; even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States. It is responsible for approximately 7,500-15,000 hospitalizations annually of children aged 18 months and younger in the United States.

"There's always been a non-smoking policy in my house, but this policy has changed a lot for residents that have younger children with asthma," said Bob Juliano, a resident in Old Colony Phase One where a non-smoking policy is already in effect. "People pretty much follow the rules here and most smokers even go off the curb to a different side of the property to smoke."

The BHA Smoke Free Policy does not prohibit individuals who smoke from living in BHA owned and managed properties. The policy does, however, prohibit smoking in BHA owned properties. The failure of a member, visitor or guest to comply with the policy will be a violation of the family's public housing lease and may lead to the assessment of a charge of up to two hundred and fifty dollars and actions to enforce the lease.

The BHA has partnered with the Boston Public Health Commission to provide smoking cessation counseling, free nicotine patches, and other resources for residents who choose to quit smoking.

"There's no smoking allowed in the park so it's easier on the kids because they can just be kids and play," said Sherdain Carter, a Washington Beech resident. Washington Beech in Roslindale has been smoke-free since its redevelopment. "You can walk through the building without someone next to you smoking and if you're sensitive to smoke you don't have to worry about that."

The BHA Smoke Free Policy and lease addendum can be found on the BHA's website at the following link:

<http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo184.html> .