

# Apartment managers clear the air

## Smoke-free policies on the rise in multi-unit housing

November, 2017 – **It's a dangerous, uninvited house guest that just won't leave.** Secondhand smoke within multi-unit housing travels through doorways, cracks in walls, electrical lines, ventilation systems and plumbing. It can cause children to have more ear infections, respiratory infections and asthma problems. Adults have a greater risk for heart disease, lung cancer and stroke.

Bloomington's Health Division had been offering assistance to adopt smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing. However, apartment managers said they feared losing revenue and how that would negatively impact the property. When apartment managers learned that 80 percent of residents in smoking-allowed properties support a no-smoking building policy, many changed their minds. Now, with the health division's help, apartment managers are planning to adopt smoke-free policies and protect their residents' health.

### Survey revealed secondhand smoke situation



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The health division worked with Association for Non-Smokers Minnesota (ANSR)/Live Smoke Free to conduct a survey that would give them a better understanding of what residents think

about secondhand smoke and smoke-free policies. The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership provided support. They selected Bloomington properties for the survey based on criteria such as geographic location of the property, number of units, smoking policy status and resident diversity.

### Smoke-free policies are needed to protect all residents from secondhand smoke harm

Survey findings highlight the importance of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing properties to help protect all residents from secondhand smoke exposure, especially youth and those with low income status:

- Eighty percent of residents in smoking-allowed properties support a no-smoking policy.
- Low income earners reported secondhand smoke exposure at four times the rate of higher income earners – even within the same smoke-free properties.

- More than half of children in smoking-allowed properties are reportedly exposed to secondhand smoke compared to less than a quarter of children in smoke-free properties.
- More low income earners live in smoking allowed properties than smoke-free properties.

### Health division is providing technical assistance to implement smoke-free policies

After reviewing survey results, Tarnhill Apartments property managers are

implementing a smoke-free policy, including all 289 apartment units, as of January 1, 2018. Girard Management, Inc. with 30 managed properties and roughly 1000 apartment units in Bloomington and 9 other cities in the metro area are next on board. Health division staff and ANSR will be providing technical assistance to prepare, adopt and implement their policies. More property managers may be following suit as they review their survey results, and more residents will be able to enjoy better health.

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