

On-Campus Smoking Ban

Veterans Affairs Medical center
1030 Jefferson Avenue ~ Memphis, Tennessee

Q & A

Q: WHAT IS "ALL-IN TO GO ALL-OUT" AGAINST SMOKING?

A: On May 1, 2007, the city of Memphis proclaimed a city-wide initiative to eliminate smoking on all hospital campuses. The motto of this city-wide initiative is "*Memphis is All-In to Go All-Out Against Smoking.*" Effective **November 15, 2007**, smoking will be eliminated on the campuses of health care facilities community wide. Hospitals and health care facilities throughout the city will participate in the smoking ban.

Q: WILL THE MEMPHIS VA MEDICAL CENTER (VAMC) PARTICIPATE IN THE ALL-IN TO GO ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN?

A: YES.

The Memphis VAMC will participate as follows:

- Beginning August 1, 2007, all smoking on medical center grounds is limited to the two (2) established smoking shelters.
- Upon receiving national approval, the Memphis VAMC will be among other VA facilities that have agreed to serve as a pilot site in a VA national initiative for smoke free VA campuses.

Q: I CURRENTLY SMOKE. DOES THIS MEAN THAT I HAVE TO QUIT?

A: No. Smoking remains a personal preference. However, compliance with the policy is mandatory and smoking will ONLY be allowed in designated smoking shelters.

Q: DOES THE MEMPHIS VAMC HAVE A NEW POLICY ON SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE?

A: YES. Policy Memorandum 00-51, Smoke-Free Environment, was published July 19, 2007.

Q: WHEN DOES THE POLICY TAKE EFFECT?

A: The policy officially becomes effective at 12:01 a.m. on August 1, 2007.

Q: HOW DOES THIS POLICY DIFFER FROM THE PREVIOUS POLICIES?

A: The latest policy confines smoking to smoking shelters. While this is expected of all staff, patients, and visitors, provisions have been made for patients such as those on wards 1C and 1D who are not permitted to leave the unit due to the nature of their clinical condition.

Q: DOES THIS MEAN THAT PATIENTS ON WARDS 1C AND 1D WHO ARE NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE UNITS WILL BE ALLOWED TO SMOKE ON THOSE UNITS?

A: No. Patients on wards 1C and 1D who smoke but are not permitted to leave the units will be permitted to smoke in the inner courtyard of the units.

Q: TO WHOM DOES THE POLICY APPLY?

A: The policy applies to all persons on VAMC property. This includes the main medical center campus and the North and South Clinics.

Q: HOW DO I KNOW WHERE VA MEDICAL CENTER PROPERTY BEGINS AND ENDS?

A: Contiguous medical center grounds on the main campus are defined as all property bounded by Poplar, Pauline, and Jefferson to the west wall of Interstate 240. Signage at the North and South Clinics identify specially designated smoking areas. For additional information, including a map of the facility that identifies the location of the smoking shelters, visit the intranet and click on: Smoking Policy Changes August 1st.

Q: ARE ANY LOCATIONS ON THE MEDICAL CENTER PROPERTY EXEMPTED FROM THE SMOKE FREE RESTRICTION?

A: The smoking restricted campus applies to all areas of the medical center, the North and South Clinics and in government vehicles. The only exempted areas are the two established smoking shelters and the inner courtyard area of the 1C/1D units.

Q: WHAT PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST VETERANS WHO WANT TO QUIT SMOKING?

A: Veterans desiring to quit smoking can obtain information and assistance through their primary care provider. Assistance will be provided on an individual basis in the manner most suitable for the veteran.

Q: IS THE MEMPHIS VAMC MAKING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO SPOUSES AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS OR OTHERS WHO WANT TO QUIT SMOKING?

A: No. However, services such as the 1-800 QUIT NOW helpline are available to any smoker who wants to quit and needs assistance and support. Also, the American Cancer Society has information available to help smokers who want to quit at www.Americancancersociety.com

FOR EMPLOYEES

Q: DOES THE POLICY PROHIBIT ME FROM BRINGING CIGARETTES OR OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO WORK?

A: No. Bringing cigarettes or other tobacco products to work is not prohibited. However, smoking will only be permitted in the two designated smoking shelters.

Q: IS THE POLICY IN EFFECT AT ALL TIMES OR ONLY DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS?

A: The policy is in effect, without exception, at all times.

Q: DOES THE POLICY PROHIBIT SMOKING IN MEMPHIS VAMC GOVERNMENT VEHICLES?

A: YES. Smoking has always been prohibited in vehicles in accordance with the GSA policy. See policy memorandum 00-51, Smoke-Free Environment, Section 2a.

Q: AM I ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PROPERTY TO SMOKE DURING MY WORKDAY?

A: Employees may leave the property during their 30-minute lunch break. The nature of the job for some employees will determine whether the 15-minute morning or afternoon break can be taken away from the medical center. For additional information, consult your supervisor or Human Resources Management Service, or refer to Policy Memorandum 00-51, Smoke-Free Environment, Section 3a.

Q: WILL EMPLOYEES WHO SMOKE GET LONGER BREAKS THAN NON-SMOKERS?

A: No. The length of time for lunch and breaks (30-minute lunch break and 15-minute morning and afternoon breaks) are the same for all employees.

Q: HOW WILL THE POLICY BE ENFORCED?

A: Employees who are found to be in non-compliance with any aspect of the smoke-free policy will be reported to their supervisor. VA Police have been instructed to forward violation notices to service chiefs for action. Actions will include a verbal counseling for smoking in an unauthorized area (1st offense). Violators will receive written counseling for a 2nd offense of failure to follow guidelines specified in the smoke-free policy and instructions of supervisor(s). Refer to the Policy Memorandum 00-51, Smoke-Free Environment for information related to continuous, willful disregard to guidelines of the policy.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE SOMEONE SMOKING IN AN UNAUTHORIZED AREA ON THE MEDICAL CENTER PROPERTY?

A: Courteously advise the person of the medical center's smoking restricted grounds. Inform them that smoking is permitted only in designated smoking shelters and direct them to those shelters.

Q: ARE PROVISIONS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES WHO WANT TO QUIT SMOKING?

A: Employees who are veterans who desire to quit smoking can obtain assistance through their primary care provider. Assistance for employees is also available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Mervel Young can be reached on pager 791 for additional information on the EAP. In addition, Leadership is presently working on funding for nicotine replacement options for sale in the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) retail store.

Q: CAN EMPLOYEES OBTAIN TELEPHONE QUITLINE CESSATION COUNSELING, VISIT THE VA MEDICAL CENTER CLINICS TO OBTAIN CESSATION MEDICATIONS, OR OTHERWISE ACCESS CESSATION ASSISTANCE DURING THEIR WORKDAY?

A: Smoking cessation programs are available for employees. Employees may participate in smoking cessation programs during working hours (with no leave charged) if efficiency of the work unit is not impaired as determined by the supervisor. Employees who are veterans may receive prescribed medications to help with smoking cessation from their primary care provider. Plans are being made for items such as Nicotine replacement patches, gum, and lozenges to be available for purchase in the VCS store. The 1 800 QUIT NOW line and the American Cancer Society are available to provide information or assistance. Visit the American Cancer Society at www.Americancancersociety.com.