



Success Story

Going Tobacco and Smoke-Free — because it Matters in Linn County

Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH Program (2018-2021) funded by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is helping the Linn County Health Department and a coalition of partners promote and ensure smoke-free environments in public spaces.

The Challenge

Firsthand smoking and secondhand smoke or vape aerosol are the fumes that emitted when smokers use cigarettes, pipes, cigars, or other tobacco products—pose harmful health effects. While smoking directly is worse, nonsmokers who inhale secondhand smoke, even for as little as five minutes, are exposed to chemicals such as nicotine, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde. Regular secondhand smoke exposure can lead to a variety of health issues in adults, but children are even more vulnerable because they breathe faster and their bodies are still developing.

The Solution

Smoke/tobacco-free environments prevent initiation of tobacco use, encourage quitting, and protect nonsmokers from the harms of secondhand smoke and vape aerosol exposure. While Missouri does not have a statewide 100% smoke-free law like many other states, over 30 municipalities have adopted a 100% smoke/tobacco-free workplace, restaurant, and bar law. Through BCBH, Linn County has joined this national and state movement to ensure its residents and visitors have reduced exposure to secondhand smoke and vape aerosol in prominent public places — workplaces, parks, and schools.

Working adults spend most of their waking hours at their place of employment. Further, the American Lung Association reports that many individuals are at risk of, or have, lung diseases or respiratory illnesses such as asthma and COPD. Secondhand smoke can cause or exacerbate these conditions, and



Linn County ranks 3rd in Missouri for high exposure to secondhand smoke at work.

All Missourians deserve to work and play in smoke-free environments!

Maintaining healthy indoor air quality is an important step to ensure employee and customer health and wellness, and makes sense from a cost perspective. A healthier workforce means reduced healthcare costs and absenteeism, increased productivity and morale, more profitability and a better work environment. However, many workplaces and businesses do not have a tobacco policy in place, even if they consider themselves a tobacco-free facility. A written policy helps to reduce confusion, support enforcement, and demonstrate a stronger commitment of wellbeing for all employees and visitors.

Similar outdoor policies are also important. In many communities, parks and outdoor public spaces act as a relaxing refuge for all. For many users, these outdoor spaces are places to be in-touch with nature, socialize, and enjoy access to clean, fresh air. Public outdoor spaces need to be accessible, and prohibiting smoking and tobacco use in these areas enhances the user experience while also benefiting the environment. Linn County has many parks that

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people can enjoy, which reinforces the importance of protecting visitors from secondhand smoke and vape aerosol exposure through a tobacco-free policy.

The Accomplishment

A tobacco-free campus mini-grant, provided by the Missouri Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, aided the Linn County Health Department to develop a comprehensive tobacco-free campus policy, which served as a model for assisting other businesses and organizations in doing the same.



“Tobacco sign placed on the Linn County Health Department grounds.

Increasing protection from secondhand smoke and vape aerosol through tobacco-free policies was a true community-wide effort, resulting in the adoption of five new or revised comprehensive tobacco-free policies in Brookfield including, one at the City of Brookfield/Parks and Recreation, the Linn County Health Department, the North Central Missouri YMCA, Little Tots Daycare and at one public school district. Numerous resources and partners helped to ensure the development, implementation, enforcement, and promotion of these policies.

Funding from Preferred Family Healthcare enabled the Linn County C2000 Coalition to purchase 25 signs for the local parks and businesses who have implemented tobacco-free policies.

Increasing the community’s awareness about the importance of tobacco-free policy is key to passing policies. As such, the Linn County C2000 Coalition collaborated with various businesses, organizations,

and schools to increase awareness of the potential health risks associated with tobacco use and exposure. The Linn County Health Department collaborated with the five public school districts to provide education on the effects of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke to grades K-12.



“Healthy Lungs at Play sign placed at the Brookfield Twin Parks.

What’s Next?

The Linn County Health Department, along with the Linn County C2000 Coalition, looks to build on these accomplishments. Working with other organizations, businesses, and schools will help to create more tobacco-free environments throughout the area; ensure the existing policies are enforced; place visible signage where policies are in place; and incorporate more prevention and cessation resources. By working together, Linn County can be a healthier place to live, learn, work, and play.

To learn more about our work, visit <http://linncohealth.org/>, or email: aehrich@linncohealth.org.

