



# Working Towards a Smoke-Free Schuyler County

*Schuyler County Health Coalition (SCHC) is committed to ensuring residents and visitors of Schuyler County have access to smoke-free environments. With funding from Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH), a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) initiative, the Schuyler County Health Department and SCHC collaborated with businesses to enhance access to, and promotion of, tobacco- and smoke-free places.*



*The places where we live, learn, work, and play all contribute to our ability to become and stay healthy!*

### The Challenge

Firsthand smoking and secondhand smoke or vape aerosol—the combination of smoke from the burning of a cigarette or e-cigarette and the smoke breathed out when someone smokes or vapes—pose harmful health effects. While smoking directly is worse, people who inhale secondhand smoke or vape aerosol, even for as little as five minutes, are exposed to harmful chemicals such as nicotine, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. 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 brains and bodies are still developing.

### The Solution

Smoke and tobacco-free environments prevent initiation of tobacco use, encourage quitting, and protect everyone 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-free workplace, restaurant, and bar law. Through BCBH, Schuyler County has joined this national and state movement to ensure its residents and visitors have reduced exposure to secondhand smoke and vape aerosol in three prominent places: 1) the local bar and grill, 2) the Schuyler County Health Department, and 3) the Schuyler County R-1 School District.

### The Outcome

The need to protect those who do not smoke, especially children, from exposure to tobacco smoke and vape aerosol has increased public support for smoke-free policies in public places. On December 1, 2019, after some initial pushback, the local bar and grill changed from allowing smoking/vaping indoors after 4 p.m. to a 100% smoke/vape-free establishment at all times. Those patrons who originally opposed the change are now in acceptance and continue to frequent the bar and grill. In addition, this change has brought new customers who prefer a smoke/vape-free environment. With this change of practice, approximately 1,100 children under the age of 18 and 3,200 adults over the age of 18 have the opportunity to dine in their local community without the risk of smoke exposure.

The Schuyler County Health Department also made an important change—it adopted a tobacco-free campus policy to cover the outdoor premises. While tobacco use was not allowed indoors, maintaining healthy outdoor air quality is an important step to ensure employee and visitor health and wellness. Improving workplace health also makes sense from a cost perspective, as a healthier workforce means

## Tobacco | Success Story

reduced health care costs, absenteeism, and increased morale.

Finally, the Schuyler R-1 School District adopted and implemented a policy prohibiting the use of tobacco products anywhere on school property. Schools are in a uniquely powerful position to support both employees as well as to reduce initiation among students. Children spend almost a third of their waking hours in school and much of the peer pressure they feel regarding whether or not to use tobacco occurs in this environment. Prohibiting the use of tobacco products by teachers, other school staff, and visitors sends a powerful and constructive tobacco-free message to students.

# 4,500

**people benefit from tobacco/smoke-free policies**

Because of these efforts, approximately 4,500 residents in Schuyler County have continuous opportunities to visit school events, receive services from their local public health department, and dine in an area food establishment without the risk of being exposed to secondhand smoke or vape aerosol.

### What's Next?

The Schuyler County Health Coalition plans to build on the momentum to ensure tobacco-free public places sparked by the BCBH Program. In addition to offering education to the public in support of the policies, the coalition will make efforts to increase their membership and to enhance the capacity of their members to work together to ensure a healthy Schuyler County.



Schuyler County Health Department is smoke-free inside and out.

**To learn more about our work contact  
Joan Brundage by phone at:**

**(660) 457-3721 or**

**[joan.brundage@lpha.mo.gov](mailto:joan.brundage@lpha.mo.gov)**

**SCHUYLER COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT** 