



Success Story

Supporting Smoke and Tobacco Free Parks in Pineville

The City of Pineville has taken several strides towards creating a healthier community, including building new parks and green spaces for public use. With support from Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH), a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) initiative, the McDonald County Health Department, in collaboration with a coalition of dedicated members, helped to ensure they were accessible to all by making them smoke and tobacco-free.

The Challenge

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

The Solution

In many communities, like Pineville, parks and outdoor public spaces act as a relaxing retreat and a place for healthy play for all, particularly kids. While at the park or green space, users are in-touch with nature and should be able to enjoy access to clean, fresh air without exposure to secondhand smoke or vape aerosol.

Smoke and tobacco free places prevent smoking initiation by youth and young adults, encourage and support quitting of, and protect everyone from the harms of secondhand smoke and vape aerosol exposure. The need to protect those who don't



smoke, especially children, from tobacco smoke exposure has increased public support for smoke-free policies in public places.

More communities are making their parks and outdoor public spaces smoke- and tobacco-free because it helps them meet their goal of improving community health and creating spaces for healthy recreation, especially for kids and families. After doing so, communities reported that usage of these public spaces was not reduced, and instead, they received public reports of increased enjoyment of these places.

Other benefits of smoke- and tobacco-free outdoor places include reduced fire and safety risks, reduced maintenance costs, reduced insurance premiums, reduced labor costs, and reduced cigarette litter and protection of our lands, waters, and wildlife.

All Missourians, especially children, deserve to relax, play, and breathe clean air in tobacco-free parks!

The Outcome

Through BCBH, the McDonald County Health Department, in collaboration with a coalition of dedicated members, worked with the City of Pineville to pass a smoke and tobacco-free policy. Enforcement was a major concern, but the City agreed that all parts of the policy, including

Access to Smoke-free Air | Success Story

monitoring and enforcing the no smoking or tobacco use requirement, were doable. As of October 2020, all Pineville parks and green spaces became tobacco-free.

To increase promotion of the policy, the City Council purchased “Healthy Lungs at Play” signs to post at the parks and green spaces.



A true partnership between a coalition of community stakeholders, including the Access Family Care, Anderson Betterment Club, Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, Community Partnership, Freeman Ambulance, McDonald County Chamber of Commerce, McDonald County R-1 School District, PCH Clinic, OCH Clinic, Probation Office, Sheriff’s Office, SWMO Alliance, Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri, and retired community members, led this work. Having such a diverse group of people dedicated to creating a healthier McDonald County was key to the success.

This work is a result of a true partnership of dedicated coalition members!



Individuals, including 200 children under age 18, can now enjoy smoke and tobacco-free parks!

What’s Next?

The McDonald County Health Department plans to build on the momentum created through the BCBH initiative to ensure more smoke and tobacco-free public places. Those involved have discussed efforts to increase smoke and tobacco-free event, restaurant, and business policies.

Through newspaper articles and social media, Pineville hopes to demonstrate to neighboring cities and towns that community members can get behind and support smoke and tobacco-free places as a way to improve the health of the community.

To learn more about our work visit:
<https://mcdonaldcountyhealth.com/>

