



CONTACT:
Jeanie Orr, Project Coordinator
Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition
(518) 233-1106
Cell: (518)369-4963
jorr@setonhealth.org

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Smoke-Free Housing Website Launched To Protect New Yorkers from Secondhand Smoke In Their Homes

SmokeFreeHousingNY.org is created to empower tenants, landlords and realtors to establish smoke-free housing across New York State

(Troy, NY) August 26, 2008 – The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition (CDTFC), together with 28 tobacco control organizations across New York State launched SmokeFreeHousingNY.org. The site is specifically created as a resource for tenants, landlords/property owners and realtors. It offers a ‘how to’ for handling drifting tobacco smoke issues in apartments, co-ops and condos, along with other forms of multi-unit living.

“Since passage of the Clean Indoor Air Act five years ago, New Yorkers have come to expect working and dining in smoke-free environments,” said Jeanie Orr, Project Coordinator of CDTFC. “Naturally, New Yorkers now want to protect themselves and their families from secondhand smoke, not just at work, but where they live. The new website will help tenants and landlords do just that.”

SmokeFreeHousingNY.org provides tenants with actions to address secondhand smoke, landlords with ideas for implementing a no-smoking policy, and realtors with promotional tips. The CDTFC website, SmokeFreeCapital.org, supports the statewide website with additional resources for tenants and landlords.

“This information is greatly needed,” said Peggy Keigley, Director of Seton Health’s Smoking Cessation Center. “Thousands of asthma sufferers, individuals with heart and lung diseases and society’s most vulnerable – babies, pregnant moms and the elderly – are putting their health at risk, every day, simply by being at home.”

“I came here because I wanted a safe, comfortable place where I could enjoy my life. I certainly didn’t want to come home to the smell of cigarette smoke,” said Glenna McClamrock, resident and board president of Beechwood retirement community. “I’m glad there is a website that people can go to for help, because a no-smoking policy really does make a difference.” Beechwood, an independent retirement community in Troy, voted overwhelmingly to adopt a no-smoking policy. The policy went into effect on July 1, 2008.

Landlords and property owners also benefit from information on the positive economic results of smoke-free building policies, which preserve property values, save refurbishment dollars and tenant health. “Voluntary smoke-free building policies are legal and make good business sense,” said Robert McRae, an Albany apartment landlord. McRae’s apartment units have been smoke-free for three years.

Realtors who promote smoke-free buildings can capitalize on the growing demand for smoke-free residences. (74% of non-smokers in New York State favor no smoking policies where they live.ⁱ In a 2005 survey, 50% of NYC renters expressed willingness to pay more to live in smoke-free buildings.ⁱⁱ)

As, New York workers celebrate five years of freedom from on-the-job exposure to secondhand smoke, www.SmokeFreeHousingNY.org provides hope for tenants and landlords to voluntarily create the same freedom from secondhand smoke exposure where they live.

The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition is a community partnership of organizations and individuals working to decrease the impact of tobacco on our community, by promoting smoking cessation, preventing youth initiation and promoting smoke-free environments. Information on the Coalition can be obtained by going to www.SmokwFreeCapital.org

ⁱ The New York State Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS). Data collected between May and July 2007.

ⁱⁱ Annual Tobacco Attitudes and Actions Survey, Zogby International for the NYC Coalition For A Smoke Free City, December 2005.

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