



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Why is LGH going “Tobacco-Free”?**

A: It’s a matter of health. Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in this country, responsible for one in every five deaths. For these reasons, a tobacco-free policy has been established at Lowell General Hospital to protect everyone working at and visiting the campus from exposure to tobacco.

### **Q: Why have a no tobacco policy?**

A: Establishing a well-planned and written policy by Lowell General Hospital addresses the effects of tobacco use on ALL persons on all LGH owned and leased premises. The new policy gives us solid and fair guidelines for enforcing a tobacco free environment.

### **Q: Why are we implementing this new policy?**

A: As a healthcare institution, it is essential we demonstrate our commitment to good health. The health hazards of tobacco use are well known. Lowell General Hospital feels strongly that eliminating tobacco use is part of our mission as a healthcare institution.

### **Q: Who decided to implement this new policy?**

A: Lowell General Hospital’s Executive Leadership Team has studied the issue. After much discussion and research, senior leaders decided to take the step to provide patients and employees the healthiest environment possible.

### **Q: Who is responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy?**

A: We are all responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy. As healthcare professionals, it is important that we all work to promote good health and support an environment free of tobacco.

Employees who do not comply with the policy will be subject to corrective action, as defined by Human Resources policy V-C.

**Q: Where can I go if I choose to stop smoking?**

A: Employees and members of the community can sign up for “Freedom from Smoking” classes through the American Lung Association that will be offered on a bi-monthly basis at the hospital. For more information or to register for the classes please call 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) or visit [lowellgeneral.org](http://lowellgeneral.org). Employees can contact the Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-6721 or [www.eapsystems.com](http://www.eapsystems.com) (USERNAME: EAP Systems; PASSWORD: Garden) for referrals on counseling to stop smoking. In addition, information on the effects of smoking can be found at the American Lung Association, American Heart Association, TryToStop.org, National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society, as well as the US Office of the Surgeon General.

**Q: Tobacco use is already restricted...why make it tougher?**

A: Traditionally, smoking has not been allowed in medical facilities. We now feel it’s important to expand on that policy.

**Q: When does the new policy take effect?**

A: July 9, 2007.

**Q: How will this affect our patients?**

A: Providing a healthy and comfortable environment is important for our patients. Those who use tobacco will be notified of the new policy before admittance whenever possible. Patient care providers will also suggest tobacco cessation choices to the patient if requested or necessary.

**Q: Is smoking permitted anywhere?**

A: Smoking is NOT permitted on any Lowell General Hospital owned properties, leased facilities, or in LGH vehicles.

**Q: Isn’t smoking a personal legal right?**

A: We are not asking employees, visitors and patients to quit smoking, but to refrain from smoking while visiting or working at Lowell General Hospital. Recent court rulings maintain that smokers are not entitled to protection against discrimination as disabled persons. Smokers are addicted to the nicotine, not the cigarettes, which is the delivery device. There is no such thing as a legal right to smoke on someone else’s property.

**Q: Won't this hurt our patient volume?**

A: This is extremely unlikely. The overall conclusion is that smoking bans in health care facilities do not lead to a loss of revenue or jobs and may even improve business. Research shows there is no negative economic impact or loss of income resulting from taking protective measures against tobacco.

**Q: What are the benefits of going tobacco-free?**

A: Tobacco-free campuses are healthier for patients and employees.

**Q: Can employees smoke in their cars?**

A: No, smoking is not allowed on any Lowell General Hospital owned or leased property. This includes the parking garage and all parking lots.

**Q: If I am a tobacco user, what can I do to prepare for the July 9, 2007 deadline?**

A: As of May 21, 2007 "Freedom from Smoking" classes began and will continue to be offered on a bi-monthly basis. For more information or to register for the classes please call 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) or visit [lowellgeneral.org](http://lowellgeneral.org). Resources are also available through the American Lung Association, American Heart Association, TryToStop.org, National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society, as well as the US Office of the Surgeon General.

**Q: How will we communicate to patients and visitors that we are tobacco-free?**

A: New signage, literature (brochures) and announcements through the news and media will help inform patients and visitors. Lowell General employees and practicing physicians will also help explain the new policy.

**Q: Is it really anybody's business whether I smoke?**

A: It's not about whether you smoke, but WHERE you smoke.