

# Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

## E-Newsletter

Supporting Tobacco Control for Kansas

September 2007, Volume 2, Issue 8

Welcome to the TFKC E-Newsletter for those interested or involved in tobacco control in Kansas. We would like to hear your comments and ideas for future issues. See the “Sign Up” information on the previous page to receive this e-newsletter every month.

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### Legislative Committee Decides not to Decide

Legislators have again recommended that local governments - rather than the state - regulate smoking in public places. After three hours of testimony August 30, the Special Committee on Federal and State Affairs, agreed to file a report noting the public's interest in a statewide smoking ban, but that the recent Kansas Supreme Court decision encourages local policy makers to take any action they wanted to restrict smoking public enclosed areas in their communities. Proponents for a statewide ban included local elected policy leaders, health professionals, voluntary and professional health organizations, and private individuals all stressing that a statewide ban is a significant way to improve public health in Kansas.

State statute prohibits smoking in open meetings and in public places such as elevators, public transportation, restrooms, restaurants and retail stores. Business owners, however, are allowed to designate smoking areas within their businesses by posting signs.

Sen. Roger Reitz, R-Manhattan, said he planned to introduce a bill “as pure as the driven snow” in 2008, banning smoking in all public places statewide without exception.”

It may not be the time to do this, because it's an election year, but it's my take that we're seeing the desire for this issue to be addressed at the state level,” said Reitz, a physician. “I'll see how it sticks in people's craws, but we should at least debate it. If it's a bad bill, it will die on its own merits. But to dilute it is to make it unfair.”

### What Works! Grants for Clean Indoor Air Projects Announced

TFKC is completing its What Works grant award from the Kansas Health Foundation by awarding funding to five community coalitions for efforts to reduce exposure to secondhand

## E-Newsletter

smoke. The year-long grants ranging in amounts of \$3,200 to \$6,400 will provide for mobilization and educational components to help community coalitions work toward clean air policies at the local level.

The organizations and lead agencies receiving the awards are Communities that Care Committee/Stockton Smoke Free TASK Force ( Rooks County Health Department); Clean Air Manhattan (Community Health Council); Emporians for Drug Awareness; Tobacco Free Wichita (Sedgwick County Health Department); and Saline County Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition (Central Kansas Foundation).

## Youth Conference Focuses on Reducing Smokeless Tobacco Use

On August 29, more than 150 youth and adults gathered at the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson to learn how to fight against the increasing use of smokeless tobacco in Kansas, particularly by Kansas youth. Current estimates say that 17.4% of Kansas male teens are using these tobacco products that have a significant impact on mouth and dental structures, and can lead to serious illnesses including oral cancer. TASK, the Kansas youth movement against tobacco use, helped in planning the conference for a variety of youth groups and school and health professionals to learn about smokeless tobacco use and ways to combat the marketing of the product in Kansas.



Presenters at the conference focused on advocacy and health considerations in a series of workshops during the day. Gruen Von Behrens, a survivor of oral cancer brought about by “dipping” tobacco, spoke to the participants about avoiding tobacco use as well as being kind to one another. Niki Sue Mueller, director of the Wyoming Through With Chew program, traced the history of chew or spit tobacco to its new transformation into smokeless tobacco in which one can of chew can provide as much nicotine as four packs of cigarettes. Gruen and Niki are seen at the left.

The workshop was a highpoint for youth groups taking part in the “Smokeless Does Not Mean Harmless” grant funded by The Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program. This initiative involved collaboration between the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition, the Kansas Tobacco Use Prevention Program and TASK. Seen at right are Maranda Collins, Savanna Friend and Shane Reif, consultants for the program.



E-Newsletter

## **TFKC Membership Renewal Time**

All individuals and organizations supporting efforts to reduce tobacco use prevalence in Kansas are encouraged to complete a membership form (found on the TFKC Web site) to join the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition or to renew an existing membership. The last general membership meeting removed the membership fee requirement, but current members will need to update their information.

As more local and state-level policy changes are debated, it is important for TFKC advocates to know in which legislative districts TFKC members live. Policy changes, whether a statewide smokefree law, increases in tobacco taxes, additional allocations of funding for health or tobacco reduction programs, etc., require that information be shared with members who can then bring their interests to the elected representatives from their communities.

Please complete the form and return it to TFKC. You can fill the form out on line or print out a copy and send it to the TFKC office. Please let us know if you are applying as an individual member or as a representative of an organization.

As policy issues advance, TFKC must be able to cite the numbers of organizational and individual members and the associated strength of that membership across the state of Kansas.

## **New Snuff Product Tested in KC**

Even as Kansas youth were preparing to fight smokeless tobacco use in the state, the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. began test-marketing Camel Snus, a new tobacco product, in eight cities including Kansas City.

Snus - it rhymes with "juice" - is Swedish for "snuff," representing the latest stage in the evolution of smokeless tobacco from chaws to something that can be supposedly be used in polite company.

Camel Snus, like Copenhagen Skoal Bandits, comes in small pouches, like tiny teabags, that users stuff between their upper lip and gum. According to R.J. Reynolds, no spitting is required. Philip Morris USA also has started marketing snus under its Marlboro brand.

Although cigarette sales have declining, tobacco and cigarette companies are looking at reviving the market though the sale of this "moist snuff," that can be advertised as an any time any where type of product. Supposedly promoted to current smokeless tobacco users or smokers faced situations where smoking was unwelcome, the product. Is another way of satisfying nicotine craving.

A major health concerned is that snus will find its way into the hands and mouths of adolescents, an age group that consumes significant quantities of other smokeless tobacco products. Data suggest that adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to

## E-Newsletter

become cigarette smokers.

### Limited Sign Supply Available

With more school districts adopting tobacco free policies for their grounds, TFKC has ordered a limited number of metal 18- by 24-inch signs announcing the policy. Until the 40 signs are gone, you may ask for up to three signs to be mailed to you. Contact Theresa Johnston at TFKC at 785-272-8396 or at [tjohnston@tobaccofreekansas.org](mailto:tjohnston@tobaccofreekansas.org) if you want to order a sign for your school.

Each order should be accompanied by a copy of the policy that outlines the school district's restriction of smoking and smokeless tobacco use on school grounds. The signs have both the KDHE Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) logo and the TASK logo.

### Welcome to New KDHE TUPP Director

The new director of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Tobacco Use Prevention Program is Clarence Cryer Jr. He will be responsible for statewide tobacco program policies, goals and objectives; managing 13 tobacco-prevention workers across the state and overseeing the distribution and management of local tobacco-prevention grants in 44 counties. He replaces Julia Francisco, who retired as the program's director in February.



Cryer served as director of community health services for the Volusia County Health Department in Florida where administered federal, state and local programs and services addressing chronic disease, school health, HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, epidemiology, WIC and nutrition services, adult immunizations and

Healthy Start.

Cryer also worked as the health center administrator for the Hillsborough (Fla.) County Health Department; the director of community health promotion and health education for the Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc.; and as an HIV/AIDS education supervisor for the Miami-Dade County Health Department.

### Upcoming Dates

October 24-26      **National Tobacco or Health Conference** in Minneapolis, MN

January 24, 2008      **TFKC General Membership Meeting**, Topeka, 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., location to be announced

**Please share this newsletter with others interested in tobacco control in Kansas. The TFKC electronic newsletter will be distributed monthly to your e-mail. Please report a change of your e-mail address to TFKC .**

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