

NEWS RELEASE



Bruce W. Dixon, M.D., Director
Guillermo Cole, Public Information Officer
412-578-8004, e-mail: gcole@achd.net

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19 COMMUNITIES MADE PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS TOBACCO-FREE IN 2011

Prohibiting Tobacco Use Protects Kids from Dangers of Second-hand Smoke

Tobacco Free Allegheny, a non-profit organization supported by the Allegheny County Health Department, today reported that 19 more communities in the County made their parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational areas tobacco-free in 2011.

The 19 communities are East McKeesport, Emsworth, Glassport, Harrison, Heidelberg, Liberty, McDonald, Millvale, Munhall, Ohio, Pitcairn, Reserve, Scott, Springdale Township, Tarentum, West Homestead, West Mifflin, Wilkins and Versailles.

Twenty-six of the County's 130 municipalities have now joined Pennsylvania's Young Lungs at Play program that aims to reduce children's exposure to harmful second-hand smoke. The seven others that previously joined are Aspinwall, Baldwin Borough, Brentwood, Findlay, Franklin Park, Forest Hills and Upper St. Clair.

"Our goal is to get every municipality to join Young Lungs at Play so every community park, playground and outdoor recreational area is tobacco-free and a place where children can breathe fresh air and not be exposed to second-hand smoke," said Health Director Dr. Bruce W. Dixon.

Second-hand smoke is classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a class A carcinogen known to cause cancer in humans and can also cause serious illnesses in children such as asthma, respiratory infections and cardio-vascular disease.

Children exposed to second-hand smoke inhale many of the same cancer-causing substances as smokers. There is no risk-free level of exposure, and even brief exposures can be harmful. A 100% smoke-free environment is the only way to be fully protected from second-hand smoke.

Municipalities can obtain advice and assistance on adopting a tobacco-free ordinance for parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational areas by contacting Tobacco Free Allegheny at 412-322-8321 or www.tobaccofreeallegheny.org. In addition, Young Lungs at Play signage is available free of charge for communities that join the program to post in their tobacco-free play areas.

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