



Media Contact:

Stacy Shelp, Public Information Officer

Phone: 919.245.2462

sshelf@orangecountync.gov

Release Date: January 1, 2013

ORANGE COUNTY IMPLEMENTS FIRST PHASE: SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC PLACES RULE

ORANGE COUNTY, NC (January 1, 2013)—Orange County’s Smoke-Free Public Places Rule goes into effect today, beginning with a six-month “soft” implementation period.

During this period the focus will be on the following aspects: cessation efforts; planning with a focus on education; educating the public about the Rule; and identifying additional funding for cessation support and signage.

“We need everyone’s help to ensure the implementation goes as smoothly as possible, resulting in a successful outcome,” said Orange County Health Director, Dr. Colleen Bridger.

To ensure a unified and common sense approach, the Orange County Health Department is establishing a Smoke-Free Public Places Implementation Advisory Committee with multiple workgroups focused on: cessation; public education; signage, and enforcement.

The workgroups will be made up of representatives from the County and municipal planning and public works departments, public schools, Prevention Partners, the UNC School of Medicine Nicotine Dependence Program, American Cancer Society, students from Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. (TRU), and Orange County’s Parks and Recreation division. Representatives from the Chambers of Commerce have also been invited. Meetings with the police chiefs and Orange County Sheriff’s Department are already underway.

The first phase of public education will promote cessation services, available through the [NC Quitline](#), a free cessation resource for NC residents. In addition, the Health Department, along with partners such as UNC Family Medicine will take a lead role establishing additional ways to help people quit including in person classes and counseling. These resources will be promoted as they become available.

Each town and county manager has been invited to a Smoking Cessation Resources Lunch & Learn event to be held in mid-January, where county/town managers and HR Directors will learn ways to help their employees quit smoking.

Smoke-Free Public Places Background

The Smoke-Free Public Places Rule applies to property owned by Orange County and the municipal governments, including parks and sidewalks. Smoking would also not be allowed on private property where the public is invited. The UNC campus and other state governed facilities will continue operating under their existing smoking ordinances and will not be affected by this new rule.

Beginning on July 1, 2013, a \$25 fine may be issued to violators, but the emphasis is being placed on awareness of the consequences of secondhand smoke and reversing people's behavior in an effort to improve the County's overall quality of life.

The idea of a smoke-free public places ordinance in Orange County originated two years ago when a group of County high schools students approached the Board of Health, requesting they consider adopting such a rule. After an extensive public education and input period, the Rule was brought to a Board of Health vote following a public hearing on October 24, 2012, and passed 10-1. On November 20, 2012, the Board of Orange County Commissioners approved the Rule with a majority vote.

To view the Rule, learn about existing cessation resources, and learn more about the dangers of secondhand smoke, please visit <http://orangecountync.gov/health/smoke-freepublicplaces.asp>

###