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Smoke-free Multi-Unit Housing Encouraged for Home Safety Month

Collier – June is Home Safety Month and in an effort to encourage the community to take action to increase the safety of their homes, the Collier County Health Department & the Tobacco-Free Collier Partnership recommends residents, owners and managers of local apartments and condominiums to go smoke-free. Secondhand smoke can leak from windows, doors, balconies, air ducts and ventilation systems escaping into adjacent units and common areas, thereby affecting neighboring residents. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. In addition, smoking is the number one cause of home fire deaths in the United States. "Home safety includes many different activities people can use to make their homes safer. One of those ways is to encourage the creation of tobacco-free policies in Collier County. Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause ear infections as well as more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children" says Rachel Kleist, Health Educator for the Collier County Health Department. "Up to 50% of the air in apartment buildings may be recirculated throughout the entire building; the only way to avoid the health hazards of secondhand smoke is to live in a 100% non-smoking building", added Kleist. According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Report, secondhand smoke is a concerning risk factor in numerous chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, heart disease and multiple types of cancer. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their heart disease risk by 25–30%. Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 46,000 heart disease deaths annually among

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adult nonsmokers in the United States. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their lung cancer risk by 20–30%. Secondhand smoke exposure causes an estimated 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States.

In Collier County, 17.4% of adults currently smoke (2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System). For more information on smoke-free housing or the Tobacco-Free Collier Partnership, please contact Rachel Kleist 239-252-6852. Currently, 64 counties in Florida are working on the policy initiative to create smoke-free multi-unit dwellings. For information on the Florida Quitline, including information on free patches, gum or lozenges while supplies last, call 1-877-U-CAN-NOW (1-877-822-6669) or visit www.floridaquitline.com.

For additional background information: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm

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