

HEAD START of LANE COUNTY

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"Ensuring that our youngest children have a solid foundation for life."

June 2, 2009

To: Lane Community College College Council Members

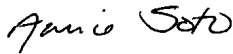
Re: Tobacco Free Campus Proposal

It has been brought to our attention that the LCC College Council is currently discussing the idea of adopting a tobacco free campus policy. We are happy to hear that the Council is taking the time to address concerns of secondhand smoke exposure on the LCC campus and would like to express our enthusiastic support for the adoption of a tobacco free campus policy.

You may be aware that effective January 1, 2009 a new Oregon Department of Education policy requires that all Head Start premises be tobacco-free. The adoption of this policy supports goals set by national initiatives of the U.S. Surgeon General, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Health and Human Services to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke among children. Research has documented that secondhand smoke exposure outdoors (as well as indoors) can pose significant health risks for young children and adults, especially for those with asthma and allergies. People living in households at or below the poverty level are more likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke and experience higher rates of asthma. According to a report issued by the DHHS Office of the Inspector General, asthma is the top chronic disease affecting Head Start children. Tobacco free environment policies protect children, family members, staff and visitors from secondhand smoke exposure, and promote healthy behavior choices and positive role modeling by prohibiting the use of all tobacco products on Head Start premises.

In many cases Head Start programs rent portions of facilities owned by a larger organization such as your own. In those instances where Oregon Head Start programs share a building or outside grounds with other occupants, programs must take steps to reduce children's exposure to smoke from outside sources. Programs are encouraged to negotiate with property management/other occupants to establish tobacco free policies covering all premises used by or traveled through by the Oregon Head Start Pre-Kindergarten participants. At the LCC campus this would, at a minimum, include the upper parking lot and bus station as many of our clients access those areas. Some institutions that host Head Start programs (like Mt. Hood Community College) have voluntarily made their entire campus tobacco-free. Should the LCC College Council pass a similar tobacco free campus policy, we would applaud your efforts to provide a healthy and accessible environment for all persons on the LCC campus, including Head Start children.

Sincerely,



Annie Soto
Executive Director

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EDUCATION · HEALTH SERVICES · SPECIAL SERVICES · FAMILY SERVICES
