

NEWS RELEASE

University at Buffalo Plans To Go Smoke-Free

Release Date: November 20, 2008

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- The University at Buffalo -- on the American Cancer Society's annual Great American Smokeout -- today announced plans to implement a 100 percent smoke-free policy that will take effect beginning with the 2009-10 academic year.

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Under the plan, smoking will not be allowed in any buildings or on the grounds -- including parking lots and green spaces -- on UB's three campuses and at all offsite UB locations.

Plans to implement the policy were announced today by David L. Dunn, M.D., Ph.D., UB vice president for health sciences.

As part of its UBreathe Free initiative, he said UB "will be offering ongoing services on campus to assist smokers with quitting and to raise awareness of the initiative."

Today, in observance of the Great American Smokeout and in partnership with the Tobacco Cessation Center and the Erie-Niagara Tobacco-Free Coalition, located in Roswell Park Cancer Institute, UB is helping their students and employees "kick the habit" by providing brief cessation counseling and free nicotine patches and gum to eligible smokers.

On the North (Amherst) Campus, the services will be offered on the ground floor of Capen Hall from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Ellicott Food Court from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Wellness Education Services in 114 Student Union from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. On the South (Main Street) Campus, staff will be available to assist students and employees from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first floor of Harriman Hall.

The office of Wellness and Work/Life Balance within University Human Resources and Wellness Education Services within Student Affairs will provide assistance to employees and students, respectively, on an ongoing basis.

Dunn said UB is the first State University of New York campus in Western New York to join 160 campuses across the U.S. that have instituted smoke-free policies.

"Over the next few months, we will be developing the final policy and continuing to meet with campus constituent groups to finalize our plans," Dunn said. The date it will go into effect has yet to be determined.

"Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and there is no safe level of secondhand smoke -- if you can smell smoke, you are breathing in cancer-causing chemicals,"

he added.

"UB will embrace a 100 percent smoke-free campus policy in an effort to make our environment the healthiest possible for all students, employees and visitors. In addition, a smoke-free campus is entirely consistent with our 'Greener Shade of Blue' initiatives, and it is in line with a request from the New York State commissioner of health who has urged campuses to become completely smoke-free, both indoors and outside."

UB convened a committee a year ago to review the university's smoking policy and to explore options for strengthening it, as well as to identify ways to assist students and employees with smoking cessation. The effort, which involves representatives of Human Resources, Student Affairs and UB's Academic Health Center, led to creation of the UBreathe Free initiative.

UB kicked off a new smoking-cessation program for employees and students 18 and older in September during UBreathe Free Week. The UBreathe Free program is being conducted in collaboration with Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the New York State Smokers Quitline, the Erie-Niagara Tobacco-Free Coalition, Tobacco Cessation Center North and the New York State Department of Health.