



AMERICANS FOR NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS

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New HUD Rule Lets Millions of U.S. Residents Breathe Smokefree Air at Home

[Berkeley, CA] July 30, 2018: Americans living in public housing are set to breathe healthier air at home. A landmark [federal rule](#) requiring all public housing in the U.S. to be smokefree is reaching its July 31 implementation deadline, which will give 2 million public housing residents the ability to breathe easier at home.

The rule adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is an important step in protecting nonsmokers and families from exposure to a serious health hazard where they live. This public health measure will reduce secondhand smoke exposure and create a healthier living environment for individuals living in public housing, including low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities. People who live in apartment buildings and other multi-unit housing share the air, and smoking in one unit can lead to secondhand exposure for other residents in the building.

“Secondhand smoke is more than a bad odor or a nuisance; it is a serious health hazard and a top preventable cause of acute and chronic diseases,” said Cynthia Hallett, President and CEO of ANR. “Smoking in one unit typically means other residents in the building are also exposed because smoke travels throughout a building.” There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Gimmicks like air purifiers or fans do not address the health hazards of secondhand smoke.

HUD adopted its rule in 2016 after many years of planning and development, and the rule went into effect in February 2017. Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) across the country have had an 18 month period to adopt and implement a policy that requires all of their public housing properties to be 100% smokefree indoors, and within 25 feet of buildings, by the July 31, 2018 deadline.

HUD's rule applies to multi-unit and scattered site public housing properties, but does not cover other HUD-funded properties such as Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) properties, nor tribal housing authorities. While these other HUD-funded properties are not required to go smokefree, they are encouraged to adopt their own policies to expand smokefree protections to additional residents.

HUD's rule is part of a broader nationwide trend for smokefree living environments in order to improve residents' access to healthier living environments, as well as to reduce fire risk and cleaning and maintenance costs. Hundreds of PHAs had already implemented smokefree policies prior to the adoption of HUD's rule, and their experiences are benefiting other PHAs as they now go through the process. Additionally, [more than 40 cities and counties](#) now have local laws requiring smokefree air in all multi-unit housing. Also, property owners, management companies, and condo associations throughout the country continue to adopt smokefree policies for their multi-unit properties.

Over the last 18 months, resources and technical assistance have been made available to PHAs from tobacco control and affordable housing partners at the local, state, and federal levels in order to prepare residents, building

managers, and staff for the policy change. ANR has [materials available to assist PHAs](#) and building managers with the process of implementing and enforcing their smokefree policies in a manner that is supportive of residents.

[One third of adults](#) who receive HUD housing assistance smoke, which is twice the rate than the general population, and half of these smokers tried to quit. A smokefree living environment can support residents who want to quit smoking and a key part of the implementation of HUD's rule is to connect residents with cessation resources available in their area.

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[Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights](#), established in 1976, is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping nonsmokers breathe smokefree air.