

Evaluation of a 100% Smoke Free Policy in Multi-Unit Housing Complexes in Merced County



Background

Throughout California, the increasing awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure are encouraging tenants to seek out smoke-free apartment complexes and prompting property owners to adopt 100% smoke-free policies at their buildings. As of May 1, 2016, eight multi-unit housing (MUH) complexes, managed by Merced County Housing Authority and Always With Integrity (AWI) Management Company, have adopted 100% smoke-free policies at their premises. To date, these policies create a smoke-free environment for tenants in over 790 apartment units.

Approximately one-year after the adoption of the smoke-free policies in the eight Merced County locations, tenants were evaluated to determine if the policy influenced their smoking behaviors, their exposure to second hand smoke and tobacco-related litter, and their overall favorability towards the policy.

Summary of Key Findings

Smoking Behaviors

- Among those who reported ever smoking (n = 45), 5 people stated they quit smoking due to the policy
- Average number of cigarettes smoked daily decreased from 10.73 per day before the policy to 5.64 cigarettes per day after the policy

Secondhand Smoke Exposure and Tobacco-Related Litter

- 62.6% reported never experiencing secondhand smoke after the policy was adopted, compared to only 41.4% before the policy
- 76.1% reported a decrease in tobacco—related litter on the premises after the policy

Tenants Favorability of Policy

- 83.5% liked having the smoke-free policy at their building

Demographics

- n = 188
- Average Age: 47
- Female: 79%; Male: 20.4%
- White: 14.6%; Black 7.3%; Hispanic/Latino: 69.3%; Asian: 2.9%; Biracial: 2.2%; Other: 3.6%
- Average Time Lived in Building: 90 months or 7.5 years

Methodology

- Trained data collectors from the Merced County Department of Public Health and community partners, distributed a self-report questionnaire, door-to-door, to residents at smoke-free MUH locations
- For residents who were not home, a self-addressed stamped envelope containing the survey was left for them to complete and return in the mail
- Surveys were available in both English and Spanish
- Data was collected between 3/9/2017 and 4/5/2017

Community Partners

