

Evaluation of the Impact of a Local Smoke-free Multiunit Housing Policy: Summary of Baseline Survey of Tenants Living in Subsidized Housing

Project Staff: Barbara Pizacani, PhD, Principal Investigator, barbara.a.pizacani@state.or.us; Kristen Rohde, MA, Project Coordinator, kristen.rohde@state.or.us

Affiliations: Program Design and Evaluation Services, Multnomah County Health Department and Oregon Public Health Division, 827 NE Oregon Street, Suite 250, Portland, Oregon 97232.

Introduction: In 2007-2008, Guardian Property Management LLC (Guardian) instituted a smoke-free policy in all of its housing units as well as common areas and grounds. In May 2008, a survey was mailed to 839 tenants from 17 Guardian subsidized buildings (section 8 and section 42) in the Portland Metropolitan Area.

The survey assessed attitude towards the policy, exposure to secondhand smoke before and after the policy, and changes in smoking-related behavior since the policy implementation. 687 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 82%. Below are select findings from the survey.

Findings:

- Select characteristics of the respondents:
 - 69% were female
 - 63% were over the age of 55
 - 52% reported living in their apartment complex for 4 or more years
 - 25% were smokers

- Satisfaction with the “No Smoking” policy:
 - Overall, 74% of respondents were very or somewhat happy with the “No Smoking” policy
 - Even among smokers, 30% reported being very or somewhat happy with the policy

- Reductions in secondhand smoke exposure among **non-smoking respondents** after the implementation of the “No Smoking” policy:
 - The percentage of non-smokers who reported **never** being exposed to secondhand smoke **in their apartments** increased 74% (from 34% before the policy to 59% after the policy)
 - The percentage of non-smokers who reported **never** being exposed to secondhand smoke in “**indoor shared areas, like hallways and entryways,**” increased 58% (from 40% before the policy to 63% after the policy)
 - The percentage of non-smokers who reported **never** being exposed to secondhand smoke “**outdoors on porches, patios, or balconies,**” increased 108% (from 25% before the policy to 52% after the policy)

- Positive news for smokers:
 - 43% reported smoking less since the policy was implemented
 - 44% reported having made an attempt to quit smoking since the policy was implemented
 - Among smokers who tried to quit, 67% cited the “No Smoking” policy as part of or the main reason for the quit attempt