**Internal Messaging Q&A**

**What does the term "tobacco use" mean?**

Tobacco use includes smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing any tobacco product.

**What is a "tobacco product"?**

"*Tobacco products”* are items madeentirely or partly from the leaf of the tobacco plant and “manufactured to be used for smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing." (WHO

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Article 1)

**Why is tobacco use dangerous?**

Tobacco use is responsible for over 8,000 deaths a year in Massachusetts and costs the Commonwealth about $1.7 billion annually in lost productivity due to premature death. Tobacco use is addictive and no safe threshold levels have been established; this means there is no safe way to use tobacco. Substances in tobacco and tobacco smoke may cause harm even at low levels of exposure. Tobacco use in and around hospitals poses major health and safety risks.

**What is a tobacco-free policy?**

A tobacco-free policy prohibits tobacco use in all areas of a designated location, both indoors and outside..

**How is a tobacco-free policy different from the current smoke-free policy?**

While smoking within the facility is already prohibited, smoking and tobacco use in cars, outside of the building and in designated areas will also be prohibited with the tobacco-free policy. To use tobacco products, one will have to leave the premises completely.

**As an employee, am I required to stop smoking when the new policy is implemented?**

No. We are not requiring that employees stop using tobacco, but tobacco use will not be permitted on the hospital campus. We encourage and support employees’ tobacco cessation efforts and several measures are in place to assist staff members to stop using tobacco. We provide support for cessation of tobacco use in the form of individual counseling, prescriptions for pharmaceutical therapy (including nicotine replacement products) as well as group cessation programs or counseling sessions.

**How should we address the tobacco-free policy with tobacco-using patients?**

Inform patients that the hospital is tobacco-free and tobacco use of any kind will not be permitted anywhere on the campus. Upon admittance, cessation resources and tobacco-abatement products will be offered to patients and/or visitors.

**What about individual rights?**

We respect the right to choose to use tobacco products, but as a healthcare provider, the hospital has the right to provide a healthy and safe environment for those in our care.

**External Messaging Q&A**

**Why is the hospital going tobacco-free?**

As a healthcare provider, we feel that becoming tobacco-free is an important part of effectively caring for our patients. By improving the quality and safety of the healthcare setting, we are also improving the health and wellbeing of our employees, patients, and visitors.

**Why can’t people smoke outside of the hospital?**

Tobacco use in and around hospitals poses major health and safety risks. There is no safe way of using tobacco. No safe threshold levels have been established. This means that substances in tobacco and tobacco smoke may cause harm even at low levels of exposure.

**How will the hospital address patients who use tobacco?**

Upon admittance, patients will be informed that the hospital is tobacco-free and tobacco use of any kind will not be permitted anywhere on the campus. Cessation resources and tobacco-abatement products will be offered to patients and/or visitors.

**How will the hospital address employees that use tobacco products?**

We are not requiring that employees stop using tobacco, but tobacco use will not be permitted on the hospital campus. We encourage and support employees’ tobacco cessation efforts and several measures are in place to assist staff members to stop using tobacco. We provide support for cessation of tobacco use in the form of individual counseling, prescriptions for pharmaceutical therapy (including nicotine replacement products) as well as group cessation programs or counseling sessions.