To the Editor,

[Your facility’s name here] is committed to promoting good health for our patients and our community. Our hospital is now taking this commitment to a higher level by becoming a tobacco-free facility.

“Tobacco free” means no tobacco use is permitted on campus by [hospital name]’s staff, patients or visitors. We are taking this important step for a number of reasons - Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the US. The negative impact of tobacco use on health is well documented. An estimated 50 percent of tobacco users die as a result of their addiction, and the US Surgeon General has issued a finding that "[t]here is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Any exposure to tobacco smoke - even an occasional cigarette or exposure to secondhand smoke - is harmful."

[Your facility’s name] has reached this milestone as part of the Massachusetts Hospital Association’s “Tobacco-Free Hospitals: Healing Inside and Out” initiative, which has been ongoing since 2011. We are proud to add our name to the growing list of Bay State hospitals that have achieved tobacco-free status. I’m sure we’ll all breathe easier as a result of this effort.