



## **Tobacco-Free Policies For Parks & Outdoor Recreation Facilities Make Sense.**

### **Here's why:**

- **Parks are established to promote healthy activities.** The purpose of park areas is to promote community wellness and tobacco-free policies fit with this idea.
- **Secondhand smoke harms everyone.** Secondhand smoke is a human carcinogen for which there is no safe level of exposure. Exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate health consequences such as asthma attacks and other respiratory diseases.
- **Secondhand smoke is harmful in outdoor settings.** Secondhand smoke levels in outdoor public places can reach levels as high as those found in indoor facilities where smoking is permitted.
- **Cigarette litter is dangerous.** Discarded cigarettes pollute the land and water and may be ingested by toddlers, pets, birds or fish.
- **Tobacco-free policies help change community norms.** Tobacco-free policies establish the community norm that tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults within the entire community.
- **Policies provide consistency among community athletic facilities and groups.** The majority of community sporting events are held at either city or school district athletic facilities, and nearly all school districts prohibit tobacco use on their entire grounds. Also, many community athletic associations have policies but use city recreation facilities and would benefit from a city-wide policy.
- **Tobacco-free environments promote positive community role modeling and protect the health, safety, and welfare of community members.** Adults are role models, the more youth see tobacco use they will view it as an accepted norm and are more likely to start using tobacco products.
- **Tobacco-free policies help break the connection between tobacco and sports.** For years the tobacco industry has sponsored sporting events and advertised at recreational events, misleading young people's perception of tobacco use. Research indicates that sporting events expose youth to extensive tobacco use by people they view as positive role models.

