



Fellow Chamber Members:

As a Community Health Advocate with the QuitDoc Foundation, I work to help improve the overall health of our community. One of my duties is to serve as the Facilitator of the Tobacco Free Partnership of Columbia County. The Partnership's goal is to reduce the use of tobacco products within our community and to protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. I can help local businesses, like yours, to reduce their healthcare and overhead costs by developing and implementing effective tobacco free policies. We are also able to assist employees with linkage tobacco cessation programs.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke cost 92 billion dollars annually in productivity loss. A new research study conducted by Ohio State University puts the employer cost of tobacco use per employee at \$4,056 in estimated lost productivity costs and \$2,056 in estimated lost medical costs. This means that the annual cost to your bottom line is over \$6,000 for each employee that smokes.

Becoming a Tobacco Free Business is a simple process that will lead to healthier staff as well as money saved! Through the Tobacco Free Partnership of Columbia County, not only are we able to provide information on free cessation services for your staff but we are also able to help with the creation of tobacco free policies that will increase productivity and assist with custom signage for the long-term communication of the policy.

To get the process started on becoming a healthier employer you can go to www.TFP-Columbia.org and click on the Tobacco Free Business tab. Under this tab you will find numerous resources and information on the benefits of tobacco free worksite policy. If interested, you can also download and fill out the Tobacco Free Worksite Wellness Assessment; return this survey to me at the email provided below and I will schedule a follow up appointment to discuss the cost savings you will experience by becoming a tobacco free worksite.

Sincerely,

Joseph O'Hern
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