

No-smoking policy approved

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

BRENDA FIELDER went from a pack to three cigarettes during her work day. Betty Weiss quit altogether.

Both work at Botsford General Hospital, which instituted a new no-smoking policy about a month ago. Both still have difficulty curbing their smoking urge.

Yet both can and are living with the Farmington Hills hospital's policy that prohibits smoking on-the-job. But smokers can find relief during certain hours in the administration building's patio cafe and, when available, an empty classroom.

Visitors are allowed to smoke. Smoking is prohibited in hospital vehicles.

"It's been very positive. I have received no hate letters," said Margo Gorchow, director of Health Development Network, the hospital's health promotion and education division.

DEVELOPING A smoking policy was a democratic process. Smokers and non-smokers served on the smoking-clean air committee, which drafted the policy.

"We wanted a real cross-section of everybody," said Gorchow, committee chairwoman and avowed non-smoker.

The state's new Indoor Clean Air Act provided the impetus for a smoking policy, as it has for city halls, school administrative offices and corporations, such as Michigan Bell. But most hospital officials agreed the time had come when smoking in a health care facility was inappropriate, Gorchow said.

The policy is not a blanket edict by non-smokers. Smokers were given their opportunity for comment and in the final draft were given consideration for their habit.

"Where there was no agreement, non-smokers prevailed," said Robert Wolfe, security services director and committee member. "We tried to look at issues of equity."

An absolute ban on smoking was not an appropriate choice.

"We felt at this point that we did not want to take that measure. That was a step that was more aggressive than we felt was called for. It's not

'They are making smokers feel like second-rate citizens.'

— Brenda Fielder, Botsford employee



just the words on the paper. It's how it's implemented," Gorchow said.

AND SO far, so good. Though some employees have been caught smoking in the emergency waiting room, most seem to be respecting the new policy. Punishment for violating the policy does not come in the form of reprimands or discipline. Only the severest punishment is meted — peer pressure.

Every now and then, when Fielder

lights up — in smoking areas — she faces scorn.

"They are making smokers feel like second-rate citizens," she said, adding she has no intention of kicking the habit.

Though some, like Fielder, don't want to stop smoking, she agrees with others that the policy has been good, even for smokers.

"Even the few grumblers we have

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photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Margo Gorchow, Botsford's Health Division Network executive director.

Hospital clinic helps employees kick smoking habit

By Joanne Maliszewski
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When Botsford General Hospital officials banned on-the-job smoking, they felt an obligation to help ease the pain of employees who wanted to kick the habit.

That's when they decided to offer hospital employees free participation in the "Smokeless System" — the hospital's smoking clinic. Employees generally are given a 50 percent discount.

"I feel very strongly that if we ban smoking, we have the moral obligation to help," said Margo Gorchow, Botsford's Health Development Network director.

The day the smoking policy went into effect, smoking employees were

encouraged to sign up for the program. More than 40 have participated, to varying degrees of success.

Smoking is not just a habit that smokers associate with certain activities — telephone conversation, after meals, working. It's an addiction. "Nicotine is the most addictive substance known to man, including heroin," Gorchow said.

Though physically addictive, smoking does not have the withdrawal problems that accompany other drugs, including alcohol, Gorchow said.

STILL, SMOKING isn't easy to stop. The "Smokeless System" tries to wean smokers off cigarettes by "giving them a bag of tricks," Gorchow said.

One of the tricks — for smokers who can tolerate it — is a baby jar full of old cigarette butts that can be carried around for memories of the smell. The idea is that the smell should be so nauseating that it will remind smokers they don't want to smoke.

"They give you a lot of behavioral tips on how to tame the situation where you want to smoke," said Botsford nurse Betty Weiss, who recently quit smoking — on her own — yet signed up for the clinic.

Smokers have to find certain behavioral tricks that work for them. Prohibiting on-the-job smoking, for example, has helped many at least reduce smoking because it takes away one of the situations that smokers associate with smoking.

Gorchow said.

The "Smokeless System" is offered mornings, afternoons and evenings to employees, community residents and corporations who wish to help their employees, Gorchow said.

THE PROGRAM begins with an introductory session showing smokers how to prepare to quit. That's followed by about four days of treatment — mostly behavioral tips. Reality — the effects of smoking — also are thoroughly discussed. When the program is over, smokers are not left to their own devices. The clinic follows-up on participants and offers continued encouragement.

Besides the second-hand smoke that's considered hazardous for non-

smokers, concern is growing for the increasing number of women who smoke, particularly nurses who comprise the largest group of female smokers, Gorchow said.

"More and more women are smoking. Those in power positions are taking on the trappings of masculine behavior in power positions. We have every concern that lung cancer will surpass breast cancer as the number one killer of women," Gorchow said.

What serves as an obstacle in encouraging women to quit smoking is that many gain weight. Because smoking increases the heart rate, the metabolism slows down without nicotine and weight is easy to gain. But the metabolism eventually levels out, Gorchow said.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Muddy duo

Mud Day was a fun day for those who romped and rolled, splashed and splattered their way through Nankin Mills Picnic Area April 22. It was a special treat for David Brown (left), 4, and Lorie Herman, 5, both of Farmington. Youngsters charged through a specially wa-

tered park section, free from parental warnings to keep their clothes clean. Wayne County Parks officials promised parents it would only be a once-a-year event. Until the next Mud Day, youngsters got muddy at their own risk.



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