



News Release

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DAVID LAWRENCE CENTER LOCATIONS GO TOBACCO-FREE IN THE NEW YEAR

NAPLES, FL - The David Lawrence Center, Collier County's only not-for-profit community mental health and substance abuse treatment facility, has set a New Year's resolution to have a healthier work and treatment environment. Effective January 1st, 2010, the Center will join Southwest Florida hospitals and thousands of healthcare providers across the United States in their efforts to help employees, patients and their families quit the habit by becoming a tobacco-free campus. Employees, visitors and patients in outpatient treatment programs will no longer be allowed to smoke on campus after the first of the year.

David Schimmel, CEO of the David Lawrence Center, "Agrees that as a healthcare provider and an addiction treatment facility, it is just the right thing to do for our employees and patients. Smoking and tobacco use is a health risk and an addiction. We want to improve the overall wellness of our employees and patients and support them in their efforts to live a healthier life."

The Center began transitioning to a no-smoking, tobacco-free campus in July 2009, by starting with employees. A Wellness Team made of clinical and administrative staff with smokers and non smokers represented began setting the no-smoking policy, creating incentives for employees to quit, and offering free onsite smoking cessation classes for staff. Christine Holmes, Director of Adult Substance Abuse and Specialty Services and the Wellness Team Coordinator adds, "We knew if we started with our employees first that we would be more successful in transitioning our patients as we moved to a healthier, addiction free campus. It was important for the entire agency to understand the benefits so we could be effective role models and help guide our patients as they manage their addictions."

Residential and inpatient treatment settings which includes the crisis stabilization unit, adult detoxification unit and the Crossroads adult residential substance abuse treatment program will transition slowly over the next several months and will be completely smoke-free by April 2010. Holmes acknowledged it will be tough addressing this more intense, highly stressed population. The Center will be working with the Collier County Department of Health to provide smoking cessation assistance to patients on an ongoing basis.

To help enforce the policy with patients, family members, visitors and employees, signs have been installed throughout each David Lawrence Center campus at entrances and high traffic areas. In addition by the January 1, 2010 deadline, ashtrays and cigarette receptacles will be uninstalled. Changes to patient treatment protocols and enforcement policies have been developed as well with a sensitive clinical approach.

David Lawrence Center is a not-for-profit, community mental health center that provides affordable mental health and substance abuse services in Southwest Florida. In addition to helping children with behavioral, emotional and substance abuse challenges, the Center provides counseling and rehabilitative services to adults in crisis and individuals with persistent mental illness. David Lawrence Center has eight locations in Collier County and touches the lives of more than 20,000 people each year. It is David Lawrence Center's mission to restore and rebuild the lives of all of those in need. More information about David Lawrence Center can be found online at davidlawrencecenter.org.

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